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St Patrick, Apostle of Ireland

JOHN RYAN

1—The Documents on Which Historians Rely

IT is fashionable to-day to talk about the problems of St Patrick's life. These no doubt exist. But it should be said at the outset that to emphasize them unduly, as some modern critics tend to do, is to give an erroneous idea of their place in St Patrick's history. The plain truth is that we know a great deal about St Patrick, and we know it on evidence that cannot be gainsaid. We know more about him, for instance, than we know about St Augustine of Canterbury. For the events of his life we have many sources of information. These vary greatly in value. To distinguish the good from the bad is the duty of the historian. When he has done this and linked every item of information that comes to us from a reliable source in an orderly narrative, he should be able to give a fair picture of the man and his work.

By far the most important source of our knowledge are two documents from St Patrick's own pen. These can be read and studied. They are not books in our sense of the term, but neither are they mere scraps of paper, casually penned to serve a trivial purpose. The longer of the two, the *Confession*, has 62 short paragraphs in a modern edition ; the shorter, an *Epistle* to (or against) a British king Coroticus, has not more than 21 paragraphs. In 83 paragraphs a man can say quite an amount about himself. Indeed every salient fact in St Patrick's career could easily have been given in a document of this length, if it had been the saint's purpose to do this. But that was not St. Patrick's purpose in writing his *Confession* and the *Epistle to Coroticus*. These two documents are most valuable as authentic sources, but they do not meet all the requirements of a modern biographer.

There will be few who have not read the ' Confessions of St Augustine '. This book ranks among the most famous documents of the world's literature. It tells us much about the great Doctor of the Church ; it reveals the secrets of Augustine's heart as no other man could have revealed them. But it is not a biography of St Augustine. Patrick does not seem to have read the ' Confessions ' of his famous contemporary. Yet he gave his own pamphlet or letter a similar title, *Confessio*, and he wrote it, in part at least, to serve a similar purpose. The coincidence is not without interest.

Like St Augustine, Patrick makes the *Leitmotiv* of his *Confession*

the rendering of thanks to God for His undeserved mercies towards himself. In paragraph after paragraph Patrick stresses his own natural nothingness. He was, so he declares, like a stone lying in the mud—a simile which he has borrowed from the Psalmist—until God raised him up and placed him on the very top of the wall. That is why he cannot remain silent—for it would not be right to keep silence 'concerning such great benefits and such great grace as the Lord has deigned to confer on me in the land of my captivity'. He must continue to 'exalt and praise His wondrous works before every nation which is under Heaven'.

Patrick had a second motive for writing his *Confession*. He had been exposed to criticism in his own person. It was said of him that he was ill-educated, lacking in the culture that might be expected of a bishop, untrained for higher administrative office. He had done wrong in wishing to be sent to Ireland as a missionary and consecrated a bishop. Such talk went on after he had come to Ireland. Men had spoken slightingly of him in Britain and in Gaul. 'Think of his rude background', they said: 'he has received no proper education: his grammar is bad: he cannot write good Latin'. Such criticism was bound to cause pain; if it were only hurtful to his personal pride, it could be borne. But it offended also against the fundamental virtue of justice. Hence the truth must be proclaimed: the true facts about Patrick's vocation and about the fruits of his work.

Patrick's *Confession* is thus not a formal autobiography. Its purpose is to prove four main assertions: that he had received the call to convert the Irish people from God himself; that he had returned to Ireland for that reason, and for no other; that he had done right in coming to Ireland as a missionary bishop, however defective his qualifications might appear to be; and that his success as a missionary bishop in Ireland was a sufficient answer to all critics and sceptics. The *Confession* is thus a very personal document. It throws light on Patrick's character and tells us something of his early life in Britain, of his captivity in Ireland and of his ecclesiastical training. But there are many gaps, and the story he tells throws little or no light on the social and political events that loom so large in the traditional secular history of the Ireland of his day.

The *Epistle to Coroticus*, which is most probably earlier in date than the *Confession*, is little more than a sharp cry of anguish and indignation which had been wrung from the saint's heart by a savage outrage. Coroticus was a prince who seems to have ruled a people in northern Britain, probably in the region of Strathclyde. He had come with a number of his ships to the Irish coast, on a freebooting expedition. He and his soldiers had met a group of Christian converts whom Patrick had baptised and confirmed on the previous day. They were still dressed in white garments—a detail which suggests that the day in question was

Whit Sunday or Whit Monday. The raiders fell upon this group, murdered some of them and carried others away into captivity. Coroticus was, in name at least, a Christian, and so were his men. Patrick was insulted and disgusted by their brutality. He himself was a Briton : Coroticus was also a Briton. He was a Christian bishop : Coroticus was a Christian prince. Yet this fellow-countryman and fellow-Christian had murdered Patrick's converts or carried them off to slavery.

Patrick immediately sent a priest to Coroticus, with the request that the captives should be returned at once, and with them a share at least of the booty. The priest and his companions were received with scorn, and returned empty-handed. There was now but one remedy left ; this Patrick sought to apply. He wrote a letter to the Christian community of which Coroticus was a member, to Patrick's ' fellow-citizens and fellow-citizens of the holy Romans ', in which he asks them to persuade Coroticus and his bandits to change their ways. Patrick's letter was to be read publicly in the presence of all the people, in the presence of Coroticus himself ; in the hope that ' God may inspire them to amend their lives '. But should they refuse to repent of their crime, Patrick writes, ' which of the saints would not shudder to joke and feast with such men, pay court to them or share food and drink with them ? '

It will be seen that this *Epistle to Coroticus*, whilst historical in character, deals only with a single incident in the saint's missionary career. Of Coroticus the robber chief nothing certain is known apart from this letter.

A famous Hiberno-Latin hymn, *Audite omnes*, is found in the Antiphonary of Bangor, a manuscript which can be dated to the years 680-91. According to Irish tradition its author was Secundinus, who came from Gaul with two other bishops (Auxilius and Iserninus) to help St Patrick in the year 439. The death of Secundinus is recorded under the year 447 ; his name is preserved in the place-name Dunshaughlin (Dún Sechnainn). Obviously the first question to be asked is whether Secundinus is in fact the author of this hymn. The answer is : probably, yes. At any rate the language, the metre, the form of composition, the Old Latin biblical text of which there are reminiscences in some of its lines, all point to a date in the fifth century. Throughout this hymn St Patrick is spoken of as being still alive, and his virtues are praised since ' all who love God ' must benefit by hearing them. The hymn is in form an *abecedarium*, a literary form which St Augustine used in his campaign against the Donatist heretics of northern Africa. As an example of the whole, the first stanza may be quoted :

' Audite omnes amantes Deum sancta merita
viri in Christo beati Patrici episcopi :
quomodo bonum ob actum similatur angelis
perfectamque propter vitam aequatur apostolis '.

This is known as *versus quadratus*, with four lines to each verse and 15 syllables to each line. It is a good example of the non-classical rhythmic poetry of Patrick's day.

In the Book of Armagh, a manuscript which was compiled at Armagh in the first years of the ninth century, there are four *dicta Patricii* : sayings of the saint which were thought to be so characteristic of his teaching that they were faithfully remembered. Of these the first has some biographical importance. It reads in translation : ' I had the fear of God as my guide through Gaul and Italy and the isles of the Tyrrhenian Sea '. We shall see that this *dictum* throws some light on Patrick's travels in Gaul and the Mediterranean coast of southern France.

Once the Catholic Church has been established in a country, rules must be laid down for its government. This need must have been felt particularly in Ireland, where the social and political life of the country was so different from what was known in Eastern and Western Europe. There is evidence that St Patrick set himself to meet this need. In a manuscript of the ninth or tenth century there is preserved the Latin text of 30 canons, said to have been formulated by a Patrician synod. The document begins as follows: ' Gratias agimus Deo Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto. Presbyteris et diaconibus et omni clero Patricius, Auxilius, Iserninus, salutem '. Solomon is then quoted as saying that it is better to warn beforehand rather than to find fault when the harm has been done. There follows the text of 30 canons, with the title : ' Exempla definitionis nostrae inferius conscripta sunt et sic inchoant '. Some of the canons included in this document suggest that paganism was still predominant in Ireland. All things considered, there is good reason to regard it as authentic.

The Irish Annals have entries concerning St Patrick's coming to Ireland and his work there. Indeed the most complete collection of old Irish Annals, commonly known as the Annals of Ulster, begins with the year 431. Next in importance, and older in so far as it has been preserved in a manuscript of the late eleventh century, is the text known as the Annals of Inisfallen. The Annals of Ulster mention an earlier *Liber Cuanach*, which provided entries from 467 to 628. For the early centuries (before the seventh century) we must postulate a single chronicle, of mainly ecclesiastical character, from which are derived all the various Annals that have come down to us. This early chronicle was most probably compiled in the north of Ireland. Cuanu, the compiler of *Liber Cuanach*, would seem to have ended his work *c.* 630. He was attempting to lay the foundation of a system of national Annals, modelled on the Annals of the Roman world, and in particular on the Chronicle of Marcellinus. That the entries in these ancient Annals are a valuable source for the history of St Patrick's apostolate hardly needs to be stated. The conversion of the country to the Christian Faith

was a fact so immense in its significance that it could not be overlooked. No doubt these early annalists found it difficult to attach a precise date to events which had taken place some two hundred years or more before their own time ; but the events themselves were faithfully recorded. The one event which towered over all others in the memory of the monks or scribes who set down these entries was the conversion of the Irish people to the Christian Faith. The Annals of Ulster begin at this point. All the other Annals record it.

The first book written about the life of St Patrick seems to have been composed by St Ultan, bishop of Ardbreccain in Meath. Ultan belonged by race to the Dál nAraide, whose territory lay for the most part in the present countries of Antrim and Down. So far as we know, he himself had no connection with the church of Armagh, nor was his own church of Árd Breccáin regarded as a Patrician foundation. Ultan's interest in St Patrick was thus, so far as we can see, purely historical. He died in 657, according to the Irish Annals. He was thus as near to St Patrick in time as a young man to-day would be to the men of 1798. Ultan passed on his interest in St Patrick to his disciple, Tírechán. He gave Tírechán the book which he had written, and also oral material not found in any written record.

Tírechán wrote a short memoir of St Patrick's work in Ireland, which begins with these words : ' Tírechán episcopus haec scripsit ex ore vel libro Ultani episcopi cuius ipse alumnus vel discipulus fuit '. The text of his memoir has been preserved in the Book of Armagh. Since Tírechán does not refer to Ultan as still living, it is assumed that he wrote his own book after 657. He refers to a recent pestilence in Ireland, which was probably the great epidemic of 664. A date *c.* 670 is thus probable for the composition of his work. He himself was a native of the region round the river Deel (Daoil) in north Mayo. He shows some interest in chronology, and on occasion he can tell a story well. But his memoir as a whole reads like a lesson in geography. Patrick founded churches in the midlands (Meath) ; others in Longford ; others in Connacht ; others in western Ulster ; others in northern Ulster ; others in Leinster ; at Cashel in Munster he baptised the king (Oengus) on the royal rock. His account of these foundations is matter-of-fact. He is writing for the men of the midlands, but he takes for granted that they know much, if not all, of what he has to tell them. His references to Armagh are rare and incidental.

Tírechán is a strong supporter of Armagh as the primatial church of Ireland. Almost every part of Ireland, he says, should be subject to Armagh, as though the whole island were a single bishopric. Incidentally he makes it plain that his own part of the country (Tír Amolngada) recognized this fact and accepted its subjection to the church of Armagh. But there were other churches whose attitude towards Armagh was very

different. These must have been the new monastic foundations which had risen to power in Ireland since Patrick's day. Tírechán mentions three of them : the *familia* of Colm Cille ; the *familia* of Ardstraw ; and the *familia Clono* (Clonmacnois). The purpose of Tirechán's memoir is clear. All the churches that had been founded by St Patrick in person should belong immediately to the *paruchia* of his *comarba* (heir) in Armagh. It should be noted that Tírechán, though he is so strong a supporter of Armagh, was not himself attached to the church of Armagh. Only once does he even suggest that he has visited that church, and then quite casually when he is speaking of a square paten made by Asicus, which he himself had seen at Armagh.

Muirchú moccu Mochtene was a contemporary of Tirechán, He wrote a formal ' Life of St Patrick ' in two books. The Mochtene from whom Muirchú takes his name may have been an *aithech-tuath* (people of low degree) in the neighbourhood of Armagh, but Muirchú's own ecclesiastical connections were with the church of Sletty (Slébte) in Leinster, in the valley of the river Barrow. Muirchú had been a student at Sletty under a famous bishop of that church, Aed, who encouraged him to write his life of St Patrick and apparently provided him with materials for his book. Muirchú's ' Life ' has been preserved in the Book of Armagh, where it has been copied as the first of the Patrician documents in that manuscript. In his introductory sentences Muirchú claims that, apart from the ' Life of St Brigid ' by Cogitosus, his own book is the first formal account of the beginnings of the Christian Faith in Ireland. He then tells us of Patrick's early life in Britain, his captivity and escape, his training in Gaul, his mission to the Irish people with its first beginnings on the shores of Strangford Loch, his triumph at Tara. The narrative of Patrick's solemn lighting of the Paschal Fire on the Hill of Slane is, in every sense, the high-light of Muirchú's narrative. After this he is content to tell his readers that Patrick went forth from Tara to spread the Faith of Christ throughout the land.

Muirchú is a firm believer in miracles, and he attributes miracles to the saint at almost every step of his journey. Most of them would have a poor chance of being accepted as authentic by the modern Congregation of Rites. Of Muirchú's own life we know very little. He and Bishop Aed of Sletty were present at an assembly held at Birr in 698, when the Law of Adamnan (Cáin Adomnáin) was promulgated. Soon after this assembly (700) Bishop Aed died at Armagh, whither he had gone to offer himself and his church to the successor of Patrick.

Much, but by no means all of the matter recorded by Muirchú in his ' Life ' is to be found in a hymn attributed to an earlier bishop of Sletty, Fiacc Find. In Irish legend Fiacc is said to have been a professional poet, who was consecrated bishop by St Patrick himself. In fact the hymn, as we now have it, could not have been written by Fiacc, for it

is not written in the language of the fifth century. It may perhaps have been composed by Bishop Aed of Sletty, and later have been ' modernized ' in the following century. It is almost certainly a product of the church of Sletty, and was composed at a date so early that its information cannot properly be neglected.

We come now to a very famous Patrician document : the *Vita Tripartita*, which was probably composed less than a hundred years after the compilation of the Book of Armagh. The celebration of St Patrick's Day goes back to a dim and distant past in Irish tradition. By the end of the ninth century it seems that the celebration occupied three whole days. On each of these days an account of Patrick's life was given to the people, either by a reader or a preacher. To meet this need the events of the saint's life were divided roughly into three sections, each in itself constituting a separate homily. Together these three homilies form a ' Life of Patrick ', written in the Irish language of the ninth century and called simply ' Bethu Pátraicc '. Professor Kathleen Mulchrone has shown that the date of composition lies between the years 895 and 901. Naturally, this *Vita Tripartita* (as it is commonly called) does not add much to the older sources. Yet it has one advantage which would make its absence a serious loss. Appended to the memoir of Tírechán, and elsewhere in the Book of Armagh, are certain *notulae*, notes so brief in form that they appear to have been designed as mnemonics. In the *Vita Tripartita* these *notulae* are expanded, so that we know what they were thought to mean in the ninth century. Moreover, Tírechán in his memoir does not bring Patrick further than the Rock of Cashel in Munster. In the *Vita Tripartita* Patrick is brought to Ardpatrick, to the Shannon at Limerick, and by east Limerick and Tipperary to the river Brosna.

From the ninth century onwards ' Lives of St Patrick ' were written in ever-increasing numbers. Dr Bieler, who is the leading authority in this field of study, has listed 66 or 67 Latin *Vitae*. The great Franciscan scholar, John Colgan, published a selection of these later texts in his *Trias Thumaturga* (1647). Two of these (*Vita* II and *Vita* IV), though written in the eleventh century, go back to an earlier original of the eighth century. The *Vita Tripartita* is also partly derived from this same source. There is also a *Vita* by one Probus, of whom nothing is known save that he seems to have written in the tenth century.

Towards the end of the twelfth century, after the Norman conquest of the region around Downpatrick by John de Courci, a Cistercian monk from the great abbey of Furness in Lancashire wrote a *Vita S. Patricii*. John de Courci saw good reasons for venerating the memory of a saint who was held in such high honour by the people whose lands he now occupied. In 1186 the Irish bishop of Down (Echmilid or Malachy) discovered relics of the three patron saints of Ireland—Patrick, Brigid

and Colmcille—at Downpatrick, and brought them in solemn procession to his cathedral church. John de Courci brought Jocelin from Furness to write the lives of these three Irish saints. Jocelin was an excellent Latin stylist in the fashion of his day. He wrote only the *Vita S. Patricii*, in which he added the story of Bishop Malachy's vision to the visions recorded in earlier lives of St Patrick. The lesson of his *Vita* was implied in this final vision. Bishop Malachy would find the Irish Church *in extremis* : he would blow on its dying embers and restore the spark of life : the Norman conquerors would come at the same time, and restore the Irish Church to its former glory !

2—The Early Life of Saint Patrick

What were the chief events of St Patrick's life from his birth to his return to Ireland as a missionary ?

He was born in Britain. The point is no longer disputed : Boulogne or any other place beyond the English Channel has no supporter to-day. He himself speaks of *Britanniæ* in the plural, for in the Roman administrative system Britain was divided into Britannia Prima and Secunda, as well as into other areas. The *Notitia Dignitatum* mentions a *Dux Britanniarum* in the north, and a *Comes litoris Saxonici per Britannias in* the south-east. On its western side the Roman province extended from the Clyde to Devon. Where exactly in that area Patrick was born cannot be determined. Yet Patrick gives us the name of his birthplace. He tells us that his father and grand-father belonged to the *vicus* of *Bannaventaberniæ* ; but is this the correct form of the name ? If it is a compound, as it obviously is, what are its constituent elements ? Here Muirchú offers to come to our aid. In his text as we now have it, the reading is *Bannavem Thaburinde ;* but Muirchú adds a statement : 'We have ascertained over and over again that this town is beyond question *Ventre*.' This clear statement shows us that as late as *c.* 700 the *vicus* was known to Irishmen ; not merely as a name, but as a village or a small town.

Ventre might well be represented by a form *Gwentref* in later times, taking into account the regular change from *v* to *gw* and the dropping of a *b* or *f* at the end of the original name; and *Gwentref* ('white house') may perhaps represent the *Candida Casa* of early British ecclesiastical history, in the Rinns of Galloway. The Mull of Galloway is no more than 20 miles from the coast of Down, and Candida Casa lay another 25 miles to the east. We know that this part of northern Britain was Romanized, for St Ninian built a famous church there before the end of the fourth century. A raiding party from the north-east of Ireland could easily reach this area. If Muirchú's text, which has come down to us in a corrupt form, can be interpreted in this way, his statement fits well with

another of his statements, that Patrick's birthplace was not far from the Irish sea (*non procul a mari nostro*). Moreover Coroticus, the British king who offended Patrick so deeply, was a native of this very region. Patrick's phrase in his letter to Coroticus (*cives mei*) would thus gain new significance. Patrick was deeply offended, not by strangers, but by 'his own people'; it was the old story of a prophet being without honour in his own country.

Bury argued that *Bannaventaberniae* must have been somewhere in south western Britain—'perhaps in the region of the lower Severn'. Eoin MacNeill was more precise in his suggestion that the place was Abergavenny in Monmouthshire. Father Paul Grosjean, however, holds that *Bannaventa* is a copyist's error for *Clannoventa*, a Roman station on the coast of Cumberland. Other suggestions have been and continue to be made. No final conclusion is possible, since the evidence is so faulty.

The date of Patrick's birth is also uncertain. If we accept 432 as the date of his mission to Ireland, a date of birth in the fourth century is probable. Bury argued for 389. Perhaps 385 is nearer to the truth.

Two lines of investigation seem to point to this year. When Patrick speaks in his *Confession* of his 'wearisome episcopate', he is thinking in part of the opposition to his consecration, which must have taken place about the year 430. His former friend then betrayed a fault which had occurred 30 years earlier when Patrick was a boy of 15. The date of his birth would thus be about 385. And a second line of argument brings us to the same conclusion. Patrick was 16 years old when he was captured by the Irish raiders, and he spent 6 years as a slave. If he was born *c.* 385, he must have escaped from his captivity *c.* 407. He escaped in a ship which brought him to a land where they wandered for 28 days through 'a desert'. Now we know that German invaders had shattered the defences at Trier and burst into Gaul on the last day of 406. They marched down the Rhine, swung left to the Channel and then turned south and west along the coast of France, devastating as they went. In Patrick's account of his voyage, he gives the impression that the ship in which he took passage was on a routine run. The captain and crew knew where they were going, and they had a cargo of dogs to deliver for sale. This sudden devastation of the northern regions of Gaul must have taken them by surprise. They found the land which they knew well 'a desert'. The devastation was of recent date. These facts harmonize well with the year 407.

If we place Patrick's birth *c.* 385, it follows that he would have reached the age of 47 when he returned to Ireland in 432. This fits well with his own statement that he did not return until his strength was almost spent (*donec prope deficiebam*); and again he speaks of 'the lapse of many years'. I can see no objection to fixing the date of his birth at 385. The agonies of Britain as a dying Roman province had not yet begun.

The young boy who became a slave after the raid must have had good reason to be proud of his status as a Roman citizen before that calamity fell upon him.

Patrick's people were of good standing in the land of his birth. His father was a *decurio*, a member of a municipal Council, a man of means. By this time the taxes in the Empire were crushing. The sum fixed by the authorities had to come in, and if the taxpayers failed to be forthcoming the *decuriones* had to pay the deficit out of their own pockets. Thus the Roman authorities saw to it that none save the well-to-do held office as *decuriones*. Patrick's parents were devout Christians. His father had been ordained deacon and his grandfather had been ordained a priest. Before the rise of monasteries and seminaries men of respectable character, who had already brought up their families, were often chosen for ecclesiastical orders. They would be trustworthy, and their experience of life would be a valuable asset. That they would have the defects of their virtues goes without saying. According to Muirchú the name of Patrick's mother was Concessa. This could be a genuine tradition. On the other hand, the addition that she was the sister of St Martin is an invention with an obvious motive, to connect his name with that of the great monk, bishop and saint of Tours.

To return to the *vicus* where Patrick lived as a boy. Would it have a school? Probably not. Patrick mentions priests, but not schoolmasters in speaking of the years before his capture. His father and his mother would teach him the truths of faith, the catechism. But the fact has to be faced that as a boy he may have received no formal education. Thus the term *rusticissimus* which he applies to himself in the Confession may convey the literal truth. He lived in a country village or on the farm nearby (*villulam enim prope habuit*), and had received little or no instruction in letters up to the age of sixteen.

At sixteen he was taken captive by Irish raiders. Such attacks on the Roman province of Britain can be traced back to about 350. The Emperor Theodosius erected fortifications against the marauders in Britain (368-9). Here the Picts, Attecotti and Scotti are given as the enemies. There are references to a naval demonstration by the Romans in the Irish Sea, when the Irish were driven back to their bogs : *redactum ad paludes suas Scotum loquar ?* Claudian writes (*c.* 399) that all Ireland was interested in plunder, and the sea was full of Irish ships. Irish tradition confirms the Roman sources. Crimthann Mór mac Fidaig, King of Munster, is credited with major attacks on Britain. Niall of the Nine Hostages, a greater king than Crimthann, met his death near the Isle of Wight. His successor, Nathi son of Fiachra, King of Ireland, also raided abroad. So in the three generations 340–430 raids on Britain by Irish kings were a commonplace of history.

We have a description of the raid which led to Patrick's capture, the description given by himself. It is very brief. He refers to the thousands

of prisoners taken. This shows that the raid was on a large scale, and that the place attacked was populous and rich. The ships engaged must have constituted quite a fleet. Boats of the year 400 would not be especially big. Thousands had to be carried to Ireland ; at once, for it would be perilous to delay at a port while boats were repeating their trips. The expedition suggests efficient organization. It is likely that its leader was an able king, perhaps Niall of the Nine Hostages himself, who at this time was King of Ireland.

As the prisoners were brought to be used or sold as slaves, they would be carefully selected. Patrick was only sixteen, but he must have been physically a promising young boy, for he was brought along with the rest. It was a dreary journey. From the boy's point of view the land to which he came had every drawback. It was a foreign country, with a strange language and with pagan and barbarous ways. And he himself was a slave ! His work was the very lowest, herding cattle or swine. These latter were not kept indoors, but were allowed to roam in the woods and forests where they fed on mast. The forests were in Antrim, high up on the hills. If there were any shelters they would be mere shielings. The boy was exposed to snow and frost and rain. He had no friends. He had just come from a good home, from loving parents whom he could not forget. He was a boy in his teens. Certainly fate had dealt him a cruel blow.

That the place of his bondage was Sliab Miss in Antrim is a strong feature of Irish tradition. It was never questioned until modern times, and then for reasons that are not convincing.

There is no need to relate once again the story of Patrick's reaction to his slavery. He bore it as from the hand of God. On the lonely hillsides he found consolation in prayer. Sliab Miss was to him what the retreat at Subiaco was to St Benedict, the cave at Manresa to St Ignatius. As he grew to manhood he became more and more a man of prayer. The time came when God spoke to him in a secret language, when his whole being was transfigured by burning love. He was not yet indeed a saint, but his feet were on the lower rungs of the ladder that leads to heroic sanctity.

It was not God's purpose that Patrick should remain a slave for ever. This he was given to understand in the clearest manner. The day came when he was told to make good his escape, and how to do so successfully. His instructions were that he should make his way to a port and there take ship for the Continent. He was to leave his master and travel two hundred miles to a designated port. Two hundred Roman miles is a little more than one hundred and eighty-nine English miles. From Slemish to Gorey is almost exactly one hundred and ninety miles. Of course, the figure two hundred is not meant to be absolutely correct, so Wicklow, Arklow, Wexford, would all be possible. He gives the

impression that he knew exactly where to go, though he had never been in this part of Ireland before. If the ship were in the harbour when he arrived he would go to it direct. But when he did approach the ship he was driven rudely away. The rebuff took him by surprise, and he appealed to God in prayer. The captain changed his mind and agreed to take Patrick on board. Some, if not all, of the cargo was dogs, obviously hunting dogs, bred for the chase and therefore valuable in Gaul, where the great aristocrats were devoted to this sport.

Patrick says of the voyage that it lasted three days and that the crew were heathen. There is no means of deciding whether they were Irish or Gaulish. The voyage of three days suggests Gaul rather than Britain. A voyage almost directly south would reach Brest in Brittany, and if continued for a day or so would reach Nantes, at the mouth of the Loire. These are possible landing places. The dogs were to be brought by the crew to a market-place inland. On the way thereto they met the 'desert' already mentioned. In their dire straits, after wandering for twenty-eight days, the crew asked the devout Patrick to pray for their safety. They came on a herd of pigs, apparently running wild from a forest that had been set on fire. With these they sated their hunger and after fourteen days reached civilization. Patrick had been with the crew for two months. Having left them at last, he was a free man. The years of slavery in Ireland would now recede until they were no more than a painful memory.

Patrick settled down quickly to enjoy his good fortune. But a thought kept flashing across his mind : the Irish are pagans ; why are they not Christians ? It was the first stirring of a missionary vocation—not merely that he should go and become a priest, but that he should do so with the thought of helping to convert the Irish people. Then one night a climax was reached. He was asleep, and in his sleep he had a dream. To him there came an Irishman, perhaps one whom he had known though he gives him a Latin name, Victoricus.

> And there I saw in the night the vision of a man whose name was Victoricus, coming as it were from Ireland with countless letters. And he gave me one of them, and I read the opening words of the letter which were : The voice of the Irish. And as I read the beginning of the letter I thought that at the same moment I heard their voice : they were those beside the wood of Fochlut, which is near the Western Sea, and thus did they cry out as with one mouth : We ask thee, boy, come and walk among us once more.

The callers whose voices Patrick heard lived beside the wood of Fochlut 'nigh unto the Western Sea', which is thought to be somewhere in Mayo, on the Atlantic coast, as distant from Britain and Gaul as any place in Ireland could be.

Patrick tells us of his first reaction : 'I was quite broken in heart and could read no further, and so I woke'. But he adds : 'Thanks be

to God, after many years the Lord gave to them according to their cry '. He had heard the call, and was willing to make the sacrifice asked of him.

Patrick tells us nothing of his family's reaction to this new resolve. It was the beginning of a life of voluntary renunciation. He was now perhaps twenty-four or twenty-five years old. His studies so far had been negligible. If he had learned grammar as a boy, he had plenty of time to forget it. It must have been almost a case of starting from the very beginning. He may not have left Britain until he had made some progress in what would now be called a secondary school curriculum—grammar, poetry, rhetoric. But to become a priest is was essential that he should be attached to a church. To be promoted to holy orders he must be known to ecclesiastical superiors, who would come to know him through his service in the lower ecclesiastical grades. There were few centres of ecclesiastical life in Britain, and the whole province was threatened, as Gaul also was threatened, by the new barbarian invasions. It was easy to pass from Britain to Gaul, where there many monastic centres and where the tradition of Roman education had been well maintained.

Irish tradition has preserved the memory of Patrick's studies in Gaul. One of the *Dicta Patricii* preserved in the Book of Armagh records that ' he journeyed even to the isles of the Tyrrhenian Sea '. In some of these islands there were hermitages ; but in one of them—Lérins (*Lerina*) there had been established *c.* 410, just about the time when Patrick began his studies, a monastery that for a time was to surpass in distinction all the other monasteries of the West. Its founder was St. Honoratus, who died as bishop of Arles in 429. There is admittedly no certain reference to Patrick's presence at the monastery of Lérins, but the mention of his journey ' to the isles of the Tyrrhenian Sea ' must not be overlooked. To a young man like Patrick, Lérins would be an attraction that it would be almost impossible to resist. There is still on the island a small church that dates from the early fifth century. St. Patrick may well have heard Mass within it, or even have celebrated the holy sacrifice himself on its altar.

Later in life Patrick writes with the nostalgia of old age about his wish to visit once more his brethren in Gaul, ' to see the face of my holy friends ' (*ut viderem faciem sanctorum Domini mei*). These brethren and ' saints ' were monks, from the words used by Patrick. There were then many monasteries in Gaul : Rouen, Tours, Lérins, Arles, Toulouse, Marseille, l'Ile Barbe, Auxerre. Even though Patrick were himself a monk of some other church, he might well visit Lérins. St Caesarius of Arles, who became attached to the church of his native town at the age of eighteen, went to Lérins two years later (*c.* 490), and finally left Lérins to become bishop of Arles. In Irish tradition Patrick's name is connected most intimately with one Gallic church, and one only, Auxerre. Muirchú heads a chapter in his ' Life ' with the title : ' Of his age when

he wished to study theology (*voluit discere sapientiam*), going to visit the Apostolic See ' ; but his next chapter has the heading : ' How he found St Germanus in Gaul and therefore went no further '. Germanus was then ruling his city of Auxerre (*Alsiodorum*) as its bishop. Muirchú plainly thinks of St Patrick as a monk of Germanus at Auxerre. Tírechán mentions the journey to the Tyrrhenian Sea, but says nothing of Lérins. Neither writer says anything of Tours or Arles or Marseille. In old Irish tradition Auxerre is the only church that matters.

Under St Germanus Auxerre was an ideal place for a young enthusiast like Patrick. Here he could find everything he needed. On the right bank of the Yonne, opposite the city, Germanus had founded a monastery to which he himself often repaired. Thus Patrick could get to know and love the monastic way of life without going beyond Auxerre ; and modern critics are inclined to think that this is precisely what happened. Tírechán, citing the authority of St Ultan of Ardbreccain, tells us that Patrick was on an island called Aralanensis for 30 years. This has been thought by some to be a corrupt form of *Insola Lerinensis*, but the most recent critics explain it as an adjectival form of *Aurea-lana*, an older name for the medieval Orgelena—a peninsula formed by the winding river Yonne on the lands of the monastery of Auxerre. This identification is attractive ; but it is not the place which Tírechán had in mind since he believed the *insola Aralanensis* to be one of the islands in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Tírechán says that Patrick spent 30 years on this island. Thirty years is a long period in a man's life—no longer, however, than the years spent by St Aidan as a monk in Iona or by St Augustine as a monk in Rome before he came to England. There is, however, the added difficulty that the *Confession* offers no direct evidence to prove that Patrick was a monk. He may have spent some time in a monastery, as St Martin did at Tours, or St Caesarius at Arles. He certainly admired the monastic state and believed it to be the nearest approach on earth to the life of the angels. But Patrick was essentially a cleric attached to the service of a church. At Auxerre he would perform many offices in the church. He would study the Scriptures, the teaching of the Catholic Church, the liturgy and the Canon law. His success in this field was such that he was ordained, first to minor orders, then to the subdiaconate, then to the diaconate and finally the priesthood.

Through all these years Patrick must have been acutely conscious of the deficiency of his general education. He did not write Latin well, nor is it likely that he spoke it well. His sermons would be simple compositions, delivered perhaps in halting sentences. There would be no flowers of rhetoric. But he knew Catholic doctrine : he was well versed in Holy Writ : he knew the liturgy of the sacraments and of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Though not qualified to be a professor of theology, Patrick after his long years at Auxerre was not an ignorant man.

3—The Mission To Ireland

All this time Patrick's one desire was to return to Ireland. He tells us himself that to return as a missionary was the ambition of his life (*votum animae meae*). He spoke of it to others, for such thoughts are not easily concealed. His friends were sympathetic. Even his known backwardness in book-learning did not seem an insuperable obstacle. His dearest friend encouraged him, saying : ' Look, you should be raised to the rank of a bishop '. Patrick adds at once—' of which I was not worthy '. But he did think himself fit to be an active missionary priest in Ireland, where he had once been a captive slave.

Meanwhile the hour was approaching when, in the normal course of God's Providence, the Christian Faith would be brought to Ireland. From Gaul the Faith would pass to the east and north, from Britain to the north and west. But accidents will happen. The barbarian inroads stopped progress towards Germany and Scandinavia. Ireland lay open as a missionary field. In 429 St Germanus was sent as papal representative to Britain in the fight against the Pelagian heresy. The conversion of Ireland was a project in which the British clergy may well have been interested, once the pockets of surviving paganism had been eliminated in their own land. Nor could the Holy See be indifferent to the continuance of paganism in an island that lay within easy reach of Britain.

Germanus and his companion, Lupus of Troyes, returned to Gaul in 430, and sent messengers to Rome with their reports on the success of their mission in Britain. Their report may have mentioned Ireland as a field ripe for the harvest. The day had come to make an effort to bring its people within the Christian fold. Pope Celestine I decided that the attempt should no longer be delayed.

Much would depend on the composition of the pioneer missionary group. There were already some Christians in Ireland, who must have had contacts with Christians in Britain and in Gaul. Their advice was probably sought before final decisions were made. The most important of these decisions was the choice of a bishop as leader of the expedition. Who should the leader be ? Everything might depend, under God, on the answer to that question. Patrick was a possible choice. He tells us himself that his name was mentioned in Britain, apparently when Germanus was there. Patrick's friend then urged his claims, which were considerable. He had lived in Ireland for six years : he spoke the language, though with difficulty after so long an absence : he was most keen on the mission to Ireland : he was of mature age, an edifying priest. And so for a time, in Britain, it seemed probable that the mission would be entrusted to his leadership.

In Gaul the discussion was more serious, for here it was no longer

theoretical. An expedition was in fact to be sent. Patrick's name was again put forward and his qualities weighed. It was a critical moment in his life ; and on this occasion everything went against him. His lack of learning was stressed. Worst of all, the friend who had spoken in his favour in Britain now took a different view. He spoke of weakness in Patrick's character. Nothing could be more base than this betrayal. When Patrick was about to be ordained deacon, he was troubled with the memory of a boyhood fault. To ease his mind he consulted his friend, who assured him that it was a mere scruple on his part, due to an over-exact conscience. ' And so I say boldly ', Patrick writes in his *Confession*, ' that my conscience does not blame me, now or in the future '. But his friend now revealed this fault that had been committed when Patrick was barely 15 years old. The result was easy to forsee. Patrick was publicly humiliated. The proposal that he should lead the mission was rejected with ignominy. ' But this was rather for my good ', he writes, ' for thus was I purged by the Lord, and He made me fit so that I might be now what was once far from me '. Patrick was cast aside as a man of no intellect and of doubtful virtue.

In the event a Roman cleric was chosen by the Pope to lead the missionary band. Palladius was consecrated and sent as their first bishop to the scattered Christians in Ireland, and as the head of a missionary group whose task it would be to convert the Irish people. But God in His Providence had ordained otherwise. It was not the destiny of Palladius to become the Apostle of Ireland. What happened during the next year or more will ever remain obscure. Muirchú's account makes good sense, and may give the simple truth. He tells us that Patrick was informed that Palladius and his company had set out for Ireland. He had been rejected as leader, but that mattered nothing, though the circumstances of the rejection had been most painful. He now begged Germanus to allow him to go and do his part as a humble priest in the company of Palladius. Germanus gave his consent, and Patrick set out for Ireland with a priest named Segetius as his companion. Meanwhile Palladius had decided to return to Rome, perhaps for further instructions ; but on the way he died in Britain. News of his death was brought to Gaul by his companions, Augustinus, Benedictus and others. Patrick halted on his own journey. A successor to Palladius was urgently needed, and Germanus must have felt it his duty to make the necessary provision.

No doubt there were consultations. Patrick had been considered as a possible leader some time previously. He was still available. His disinterestedness had been shown by his willingness to serve under Palladius. Some of his critics may have been ashamed of the part which they had played in blackening his character. The decision was taken to send him to Ireland as successor to Palladius. This meant that he must be consecrated as bishop. Where the consecration took place is open to question.

Muirchú gives us contradictory reports. One is that Patrick turned aside to a town named Ebmoria and was there consecrated by its bishop named Amatorex. The other is that he was consecrated by St Germanus. Father Grosjean has argued brilliantly for this latter view. His solution of the puzzle is that there was a place near Auxerre called Ebroica, the first *mansio* or end of the day's journey on the road from Auxerre to the north. Muirchú's notion of Gaulish geography was vague : he put Ebroica near the English Channel. As for the consecration by a bishop named Amathorex, Muirchú is here also the victim of confusion in his mind. The cathedral at Auxerre was known as the basilica *ad sancti Amatoris*, or *ad Domni Amatoris*. But this cathedral was built at a later date in the fifth century. Patrick was consecrated at Auxerre by St Germanus, but the picture of what happened, which came to Ireland from Auxerre, was somewhat blurred at the edges. Muirchú is writing of a place that he had never seen, and of a period two centuries earlier than his own. He has placed the consecration at Ebroica, and has confused the name of the great cathedral church of Auxerre with the name of a consecrating bishop. This solution, which I have revised in a couple of details, has been offered by a distinguished Bollandist scholar. It seems to me immeasurably more satisfactory than any alternative offered by various modern critics.

4—The Ireland to which St Patrick Came

How was Ireland divided in St. Patrick's day ? The most ancient division recorded was into five kingdoms : Ulster, Tara (or Meath), Leinster, Munster, Connacht. By 430 the old kingdom of Ulaid had been dismembered. In the fourth century its central region had fallen before an attack by the Tara dynasty. These had carved out for themselves at the sword's point (*do gin claidim*) a new state called Airgialla, which included much of Derry, all of Tyrone, Fermanagh, Monaghan and Armagh. Just before the coming of St Patrick, if not actually during the first years of his ministry, the western portion of ancient Ulster, the present county of Donegal, had fallen to two brothers of Loeguire, Eogan and Conall. All three brothers were sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages. The capital of this new kingdom, known later as the kingdom of the Uí Néill of the north, was Ailech, the bronze-age fortress on a high peak in Inis Eogain near Derry. This kingdom of Ailech soon held the chief power in Ulster.

At the same time three brothers of Niall of the Nine Hostages—Brión, Fiachra and Ailill—had risen to power in the West. The descendants of two of these, the Uí Briúin and the Uí Fiachrach, henceforth

gave Connacht all its kings. A colony said to be from Airgialla had settled in South Galway. Their kingdom of Uí Maine is represented in large part by the present diocese of Clonfert. Niall's sons, Loeguire, Conall Cremthainne, Ardgal, Maine and Fiachu, had shared among themselves the old middle kingdom of Tara, and now stretched in an imposing family group from the Irish Sea to the Shannon at Loch Ree. Thus the sons of Niall and their near kindred were expanding on a great scale in the north and in the midlands during St Patrick's missionary career. That could not be done without causing grave unrest. Strange to relate, this fact is completely ignored in our old Irish ecclesiastical records ; and never, from the days of St Patrick to the present day, has it been taken into account as a factor in dealing with the saint's missionary problems.

These problems were great enough, in all conscience. The Roman Empire had as its administrative centres the *civitas*, the *urbs*, the *vicus*. In Ireland there were neither cities nor towns nor villages. Organization of society was on a rural basis. The unit was the *tuath*, corresponding in size with a medieval barony though there were *tuatha* far smaller in size than any barony. Obviously the *tuath* had to become the unit of ecclesiastical administration. Thus a large *tuath* would normally have a bishop at its head. In other places the churches built would be confided to priests. In the first stages of the mission there were not enough priests to provide for all the churches founded ; some of them had to be entrusted to deacons, monks, nuns and even pious matrons.

From the records it is clear that Patrick, as the years went by, consecrated a large number of bishops. Their number, however, suggests that St Patrick had in mind that many of the smaller *tuatha* should be united in a single see. Much must have been arranged at first by way of experiment. The working out of a definitive system of government for the whole country could be left to a future generation.

One principle in these arrangements may be regarded as basic : the church within each large *tuath* had to be self-contained. Once borders were crossed, difficulties would arise. The tradition of secular society was military. At any moment an army from another *tuath* might cross the border with hostile intentions. The Church would need to keep itself free, as far as possible, from these complications. Where a see should be placed depended on local conditions. At any rate it could not be placed, as in the Roman system, in a *civitas*, since there were no such centres. In later Irish records Armagh and many other great monastic sites came to be called *civitates*. They came to represent, *mutatis mutandis*, the episcopal churches of the Continent, which were regularly to be found in *civitates*.

We come now to the problem of the pagan religion professed by the Irish people when Patrick came to Ireland. A fairly comprehensive

answer can be given. Ireland was then a Celtic country. Its religion must have been, in whole or in great part, the religion professed by Celts in their highly developed states abroad. Of these the best known to us are those of Gaul. Julius Caesar tells us that the Gauls were a religious people : *natio est omnis Gallorum admodum dedita religionibus.* What were these cults ? They included the natural elements : sun, moon, sea, wind. These were also worshipped by the Celts of Ireland. When Loeguire was taken prisoner by the Leinstermen he was released after he had sworn ' by the sun and the wind ' that he would never again seek to take from them the hated tribute. St Patrick refers to sun worship in the last sentences of his *Confession* : *Nam sol iste quem videmus propter nos oritur . . . sed et omnes qui adorant eum in poenam miseri male devenient.*

So powerful was this tradition that we find literary traces of it in the ninth century. The introduction to the *Cáin Adomnáin* includes, with St Peter, St Paul and many other saints, as guarantors of this Law, *grian 7 esca 7 dúle Dé archena* ' sun, moon and other elements in general.' Personal names bear witness to the same tradition : Mac Gréne, Mac Tolae (the tide), Mael Anfaid (the tempest).

Rivers, springs, mountains had their tutelary gods and goddesses. The king of the Insubres in northern Italy claimed to be descended from Rhenos, the god of the Rhine. In France the source of the Seine was a place of worship. In Ireland the source of the Boyne (*Síd Nechtain*) was sacred. Deva was the goddess of the Deba in Spain, the Dee in Wales, the Dee in Aberdeen, and the Dee in Louth. Matrona was the goddess of the Marne in France. Borro was the god of the hot-springs at Aix-les-Bains. His name is preserved in Ireland in the name of the Barrow (Berba). Trees also were worshipped. Hence the names of many peoples : in Gaul Lemovices (from *lem*, the elm), Eburones (from *ibor*, the yew). In Irish the word *bile* for a tree has generally the added sense of a sacred tree. Personal names bear witness to the same cult : Mac Dara (son of the oak), Derdraigin (daughter of the blackthorn).

But there were also deities with distinct personalities. Caesar speaks of the worship in Gaul of Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, Dis Pater, Minerva. Each of these Latin names represents a number of Gaulish gods or goddesses whose names have been preserved in inscriptions. Thus Mars bears the epithet Caturix, Toutatis, Nodons. The plural Lugoves connotes a singular Lugos, the Irish Lug. Ogmios was the god of learning : hence the name of the Ogham script. Dis Pater is represented in Ireland by the Dagde (good god) and Eochaid Ollathair (universal father). The god of the sea was Mananann mac Lir. Goibniu was the god of the forge. The Gauls had a goddess of war, Nemetona ; the Irish Celts had corresponding goddesses, the Morrigan and Bodb.

There was thus no dearth of gods and goddesses in pagan Ireland. Indeed it would appear that every *tuath* had its own tutelary god, for a

common form of oath in the pagan period was : *tongu do dia tonges mo thuath* (I swear by the god by whom my *tuath* swears). But there is no trace in these pagan records of a Zeus or Jupiter as chief god.

In the stories of St Patrick's mission we hear much about the druids. Muirchú describes the saint's first contest with these defenders of the old order. He calls them *magi, aurispices et incantores*. The three terms seem to refer to three activities of the same class, not to three classes. It may be noted that Strabo, following the Greek Posidonius, divides the learned class among the Celts into three sections : bards, *vates*, and druids. We may take it that the bards correspond with the Irish filid or báird, the poets. Caesar has only one name for all three classes, the druids. He says that they ranked with the nobles, *equites*, as a privileged class, and that they studied in special schools, often spending as long as 20 years in these studies. Their chief doctrine was expressed thus by Lucian : ' The same soul gives life to the members of the body beyond the grave, and death is but the middle point of a long life '. Whether this was regarded as universal, or as a privilege limited to a favoured few, is not stated. The ethical teaching of the druids was summarized by Diogenes Laertius in three phrases : ' Worship the gods : do nothing evil : show courage always '. Replace the gods by Almighty God and you have here no mean code of conduct for a people.

The gods were to be worshipped to win their favour and their help in difficulties. In times of doubt or crisis it was important to know what the gods desired. This was discovered by divination. Various methods were used : study of the flight of birds, the movement of clouds, the struggles of slain animals, and at a more primitive stage the sacrifice of human beings. The future could also be foretold.

Were the druids priests ? It is difficult to give a satisfying answer. Caesar says that the Celts made use of druids at their sacrifices, whereas he says of the Germans : *neque druides habent qui rebus divinis praesint neque sacrificiis student*. Strabo says that ' the Celts never offered sacrifice without a druid '. They were thus the chief persons present at a sacrifice, and therefore may be regarded as priests since the principal part in the offering was reserved for them. In Ireland there were no temples. Temples are found in Gaul, but not before the Roman period. In Ireland centres of worship might be a grove, a tree, a sacred enclosure in a field or beside a lake.

The activity of the druids as teachers of the young was of great importance. This was noted with respect by those classical writers who were familiar with life in Gaul. It made a deep impression on them, and rightly—for the ideals of education are perhaps the best means of discovering the real aspirations of a people. In Gaul the education of youth was a public service. The teachers, the druids, were an aristocratic élite. In Ireland this institution was still preserved in Patrick's day.

The young pagan Irishmen had their minds formed by the knowledge which the druids had inherited. The druids had thus immense prestige and influence. Muirchú is right when he represents them as the natural enemies of the Christian Faith. Here was one of the greatest difficulties which St Patrick had to face. He found a solution—at least in part—by undertaking himself the education of groups of young boys who became his disciples.

I have spoken of the nobler side of druidic teaching ; but with it went a rank growth of superstition which threatened to smother any purer form of religion. Pliny tells us of many plants which were used by the Celts for superstitious purposes. Details of all the known superstitious practices are too tedious to enumerate here. From them comes the material for innumerable stories and folklore. Think then of the mountain of falsehood and prejudice which Patrick had to remove by his preaching. Apart from his own powerful personality, and the helpers whom he could and did summon to his aid in this great work, had he any other natural assets on which he could count ? One great asset was that the Roman Empire had been almost wholly Christian for more than a century before his mission to Ireland began. Though outside the Empire, the Irish knew much of it from the neighbouring provinces of Gaul and Britain. It must have loomed large in their eyes. Its size, its organization, its cities, its armies, its wealth, its magnificence, all this impressed them. That such an Empire should have embraced the Christian Faith was an argument that the Irish people might also embrace the same Faith without loss of caste. This was an argument on a low level, and could not therefore be a decisive advantage for St Patrick and his missionaries. Their struggle was an uphill struggle, but the fact that they were Romans did not bring their mission into jeopardy from the very beginning. On the contrary, they might at least get a preliminary hearing since they came from a world that commanded respect.

5—St Patrick's Apostolate in Ireland

Nothing is known of St Patrick's journey from Gaul to Ireland, and Irish tradition is uncertain as to the first place at which he landed. Muirchú brings Patrick first to Inber Dé (Wicklow), and says that he was repelled by the local King of Uí Garrchon. But Muirchú says also that the same king had repelled Palladius at the same place, and a suspicion thus arises that the incident has been transferred from one missionary to another. Tírechán says nothing about Leinster. According to his narrative Patrick and his companions landed for the first time on Irish soil at Inis Pádraig, the island which still bears Patrick's name,

off the Dublin coast at Skerries. Here, Tírechán tell us, they landed and built a church, which Patrick gave in charge to two non-Irish youths (*pueri peregrini*). Taking ship again the party came to the mouth of the Delvin river (Inber Ailbine), near Gormanston and Stamullen. Here Patrick made his first convert, and baptised the man's son, giving him the name Benignus (Benén). This young boy was in God's Providence to succeed Patrick as the second bishop of Armagh.

At this point Muirchú takes us a stage further. Patrick boards his ship, leaves Brega and the lands of the Conaille Muirthemne on his left, passes Carlingford Loch and sails north until he reaches Strangford Loch. Entering the bay, the party reach the Slaine river (now the Scadden), where a man who was herding swine saw them, thought that they were a band of robbers and ran to warn his master Dichu. After some hesitation Dichu addressed Patrick, who was able to speak to him in the language which he had learned in this neighbourhood as a young herd. Dichu asked the newcomers who they were. Patrick explained the nature of his mission : he had come to preach faith in Christ and Christ's redemption. Dichu was willing to listen and learn : soon he was ready for baptism, and gave Patrick a barn in which Patrick set up an altar and celebrated the sacrifice of the Mass. It was only a barn (*stabulum*) ; but this Latin word has given the name Saball (Saul) to the place which, like Bethlehem, was a stable with a history that would never be forgotten as long as the Faith lived in Ireland.

Patrick, so the story continues, was a slave in Irish law, and it was urgently necessary that his legal position should be regularized. He made plans to approach his old master, Miliucc, and pay him the price of his freedom at Sliab Mis. Meanwhile Patrick had made some converts by his preaching, and Miliucc had heard of his former slave's success. Full of hatred for this new religion, in which he feared that he might become the subject of his former slave, he set fire to his house and so perished by his own hand. Patrick was horrified when he heard the news, and wept for three hours. But Miliucc's son Guasacht became a convert, and was later a bishop of the church at Granard, in what was to become the diocese of Ardagh.

So Muirchú tells the story of Patrick's first preaching in Ulster, and to him also we owe the dramatic story of the saint's first Easter in Ireland. The small band of missionary priests agreed that the feast should be celebrated in a most solemn manner. They made their way to the neighbourhood of Tara, the heart of the High-King's realm and the centre of Irish pagan idolatry. Patrick went with his companions to the Graves of the Men of Fecc (*Ferta fer Feicc*), now the Hill of Slane within sight of Tara, and there brought matters to a head. Loeguire, the High-King, was celebrating a great pagan feast with his druids on the royal Hill of Tara : ' an idolatrous feast with incantations, magical

devices and innumerable superstitions '. Part of the ceremony was the kindling of a new fire. An edict had gone forth that if any one should light a fire that night before the new fire was lit on the Hill of Tara, ' his soul shall be cut off from among his people ' : he would be guilty of an offence against the gods, and executed without mercy. Patrick lighted his paschal fire, and its beams shone forth into the night. Consternation reigned at Tara. The king gathered his nobles and druids around him, and asked : ' What miscreant hath done this ? ' The druids answered : ' O king, live for ever. This fire was lighted before the fire was kindled in thy royal house. Unless that fire is extinguished to-night it will not be extinguished for ever '. Nine chariots sped with the king and his two most potent druids to the Hill of Slane, but Patrick confounded them. An ambush was prepared for Patrick and his followers ; but the saint blessed his companions, and all that the soldiers saw from their ambush was eight stags and a fawn (the young boy Benignus) moving along the way. Next day was Easter Sunday, and the *Feis* of Tara was held on that day. In the ancient *Tech Midchuarta* Loeguire presided at a great banquet given to the provincial kings and the chief nobles of his realm. The saint, who had come to Tara with five companions, entered the banqueting hall, and silence fell at their appearance. All remained seated, for to rise was to do the visitors honour. Then a famous poet, Dubthach moccu Lugair, rose from his place at the table and bowed to Patrick. The saint blessed him as the first of that great company to believe in God, and Dubthach became a valuable convert. But Ireland was Ireland, and the High-King could not be inhospitable to strangers in his own banqueting hall. Patrick was invited to take his place at the table. This he did and joined in the feasting.

Another tale is the story of St Patrick and Daire, ' a rich and honourable man of the Airthera '—that is to say, of eastern Airgialla. Patrick asked him for the site of a church. ' What site have you in mind ? ', asked Daire. ' The hill called Druim Sailech ', answered the saint. ' I cannot give you that site ', said Daire ' but you can have a place at the foot of the hill '. So Patrick accepted this lowly site, and dwelt there for a time with his clergy. But there was a field round the new church, and into it a horse of Daire was put to graze. Patrick was offended when he found the beast almost making his own of the church. The horse died, and the boy who found the dead body rushed to Daire crying out : ' That Christian has killed your horse '. ' Very well ', said Daire ; ' do you now go and kill him too '. Hardly had he spoken these words when he was striken with paralysis. His wife guessed the cause. ' Run to that Christian ', she said, ' and ask him to give you something '. Patrick blessed water and sent it to the sick man, who soon recovered ; and the horse also was restored to life. As a thank-offering Daire brought Patrick a present, a bronze pot (*coire*) that could hold three gallons.

Patrick received the gift with one curt word : ' *Grasagam,* thanks '. Daire thought this a poor return for his gift, and sent one of his servants to bring the cauldron back. Patrick met them at the door of his house. ' We have come to take the cauldron away ', they said to him. ' *Grasagam ,*' replied the saint. When Daire heard that Patrick had said no more than the same word of thanks on losing the pot as on receiving it, he came himself once more to Patrick. ' You are a steadfast man ', he said. ' You can keep this pot, and you can have also the plot of land on the hill '. And Muirchú ends the story with the words : ' And that is the city which is now called *Ard Machae,* Armagh '. There Patrick built his chief church, and there the chief church of all Ireland has ever since remained.

Muirchú's ' Life ' is full of picturesque stories of this kind. Tírechán's work is of a more prosaic character. He compiled a list of the churches known to have been founded by St Patrick. This he did, not by consulting books in a library, but by travelling the roads from place to place, collecting new information or enlarging the knowledge which Bishop Ultan of Árd Breccáin had already collected. His work is thus a compilation from earlier sources. Tírechán assumes that the main facts of Patrick's life are known to all his readers. This in itself is a fact of the highest significance. He says something of the chronology of Patrick's life and of the opening stage of his missionary work. Here he is in general agreement with Muirchú ; but he then plunges into his own task, a list of all known Patrician churches.

His list begins with the midland kingdom of Meath, ' from the Shannon to the sea '. Beginning on the east coast (Howth to Drogheda) Tírechán works his way through Meath and Westmeath to Loch Ree, naming the churches founded by the Apostle of Ireland. The High-King's lands were all in this region, and the lands of his brothers : Conall Cremthainne, Coirpre, Fiachu and Ardgal. Famous places were also here : Tara itself ; Tailtiu, where the national *Aenach Tailten* was held ; and the Hill of Uisnech. Crossing the Shannon at Snám dá én (Drumsna) Tírechán enters Connacht. At Mag Aí in Roscommon Tírechán tells of a contest between Patrick and the druids of the Uí Briúin dynasty (O'Connors, MacDermots and MacDonaghs in later times). Taking his stand at Cruachu near Tulsk, south of Elphin, Tírechán describes a circuit made by the saint : to Cruachu (Rathroghan) and Uí Maine (where he founds a church at Fidarta); thence by Gregraige near Loch Gara, to Eas Uí Fhloinn (Assylin), a cataract on the river Boyle ; to northern Roscommon between Cruachu and Loch Gara, where many churches are named ; to Conmaicne and Mayo ; and thence west to Clew Bay ; then north to Tirawley ; across the Moy to northern Sligo ; by Sligo to Drumcliff ; and over the Drowes river (the boundary between Connacht and Ulster) to the northern kingdom of Ailech.

In Ulster the circuit passes through Tir Conaill, Tir Eogain, the Cianachta Glinne Geimin (valley of Rowe in Derry), the Fir Li (west of the Bann), Eilne (east of the Bann) and Dál Riata in northern Antrim. From Dál Riata the circuit goes to Dál nAraide and the rest of eastern Ulster with the exception of the Ards in Co. Down ; from Dál nAraide to the lands of Uí Tuirtre on the shores of Loch Neagh ; thence to Tír Imchláir near Dungannon, and to Uí Briúin in Tuaiscirt or Uí Briúin Airchaill, a portion of Airgialla.

From Armagh the circuit goes south to Mugdorna, where Patrick founded a church at Domnach Maigen (Donaghmoyne). Going southwards along the Slige Cualann we come to the Liffey plain in Leinster, where the saint baptized the sons of Dúnlaing, the ancestor of the great sept of north Leinster, Uí Dúnlainge. Here in the Liffey valley he founded the church of Kilcullen. Further south in Uí Cennselaig he founded Slébte or at least consecrated the poet Fiacc Find as bishop of that church. Thence to Mag Roigne in Ossory, and on to Cashel in Munster. The *Vita Tripartita* records a journey through Co. Limerick : to Ardpatrick, Knockpatrick near Croom, Domnach Mór, Sainglenn (Singland) near Limerick city, and so through east Limerick and Tipperary to the Brosna river. From the Brosna to the hill of Uisnech completes this circuit of Ireland.

Tírechán says nothing of this journey through Munster, but ends his circuit abruptly at the Rock of Cashel. Why did he do so ? Many explanations are possible. Perhaps the best is suggested by the presence of *additamenta* at the end of his text : short notes attached to his narrative, which may go back to Tírechán himself. These jottings are hardly more than shorthand notes. They suggest that Tírechán went south, taking notes as he went along on his circuit ; and that he died leaving some of his material in crude form which he had not yet transformed into narrative.

Can we be sure that we have in Tírechán and Muirchú and other early records a complete account of St Patrick's active work as a missionary ? No. The nature of Tírechán's account of Patrick's churches puts us on our guard. By the seventh century, when he was collecting his information, the new monastic churches of the sixth century were already firmly established. A general theory had been propounded that all churches founded by St Patrick should be under the direct jurisdiction of Armagh. The implications of this theory were far-reaching. If Patrick had preached and founded churches in all parts of Ireland, then all parts of Ireland would form a single *parochia* or diocese of Armagh. There would be no place left for the new churches, some of which were exceptionally strong when Tírechán was gathering his materials. Tírechán complains here and there that churches which should belong to the primatial see of Armagh had passed into other hands. Clonmac-

nois is the church which is most frequently named as being guilty. Now it is significant that Patrick is not given credit for founding a single church on the Connacht side of the Shannon, opposite Clonmacnois. Further north, towards Roscommon, the situation is different. As all this area was occupied by the same people, the Uí Maine, the suspicion is justified that there were regions where Tírechán got no help in his work. If tradition reported that Patrick had founded churches in these regions, that fact was kept well hidden. The same may have happened in Leinster and Munster. There were private, but very solid reasons why information of this kind should be withheld. Thus the areas mentioned by Tírechán may be taken as representing the minimum area covered by Patrick on his missionary journeys. Were they even the maximum area they would indicate a career of exceptional activity.

Tírechán's narrative is usually dry-as-dust ; but he has his interesting moments. The story of the two daughters of the High-King, Eithne and Fedelma, comes from his pen. Another vivid passage describes Patrick's fast of forty days on Cruachan Aigli. To Tírechán's description we probably owe the vivid impression which this fast has made on the imagination of the Irish people, and which has never waned. In medieval times Croagh Patrick was one of the four chief pilgrimages of Ireland, the other three being Loch Derg, Glenndaloch and Inis na mBeó or Monahincha near Roscrea. Even to-day crowds from every part of Ireland climb the Reek on the last Sunday in July.

Tírechán implies that Patrick's missionary zeal brought him to every corner of the country. Whether this preaching was done everywhere by Patrick in person is open to doubt. In Munster at any rate there is no tradition of Patrick's personal presence outside of Tipperary and Limerick. The way was thus open for other apostles : for St. Declan among the Dési, for Ailbe in Emly. Again, Patrick may never have reached Wexford : hence the prominence of St. Ibar of Begére in Wexford harbour as the first great preacher in that region.

In the Book of Armagh there are stories of particular churches. Slébte in Leinster was one of these. We have already mentioned Patrick's meeting with Dubthach moccu Lugair at Domnach Mór maige Criathar in Uí Cennselaig. Dubthach was a poet and a man of influence. Patrick consulted him about ecclesiastical affairs in Leinster. Converts had been made there, and Patrick was anxious to provide them with a bishop. Where, he asked Dubthach, was the right man to be found : a man ' born free, of good family, with no weakness nor blemish, neither rich nor poor ; a man, too, capable of restraint as shown by the fact that he had married but once ? ' Dubthach replied that among all the Leinstermen known to him there was but one whom he could recommend : the young poet Fiacc Find, who was just then returning from a professional visit to Connacht. Fiacc's consent to join the clergy was obtained by a

ruse. Patrick pretended to tonsure Dubthach, and Fiacc rushed to the old man's aid. ' If you must have a victim ', he cried out, ' take me instead '. Patrick was prepared to accept this compromise, and Fiacc was tonsured and became the first man of Leinster to be consecrated a bishop. His successors at Sletty remained attached to Patrick's successors and indeed Muirchú's ' Life of St Patrick ' was one of the many results of this traditional connection between Sletty and Armagh.

Patrick's churches were soon so many that he had not priests enough to take charge of them all. Sometimes he fell back on a deacon or younger cleric ; or if no men were available, he would entrust a church to some nuns or pious widows. The important thing in his eyes was to get the churches built. Once they were there, priests would come to serve them. In this Patrick was not mistaken. Vocations multiplied. Before his death, if Tírechán is a good guide, the saint had consecrated between 50 and 60 bishops. These were placed in the pivotal churches ; and each church of that kind would become in due course an episcopal see.

There can be no doubt that Patrick organized the Church in Ireland on the model of the Church of his day throughout the Roman and Christian world. Bishops ruled their priests as well as their people ; in addition to the priests there were the various lower grades of deacons, subdeacons, readers, exorcists and the rest. No doubt the boundaries of the various sees were not as yet firmly fixed, but the same was true of many sees in Gaul and other countries in Patrick's day. Boundaries of the smaller Irish *tuatha* were constantly shifting, for it was a period of grave unrest, especially in the regions in which Patrick was most active as a missionary preacher.

In his *Confession* Patrick speaks of monks and nuns as the flower of his flock. He was amazed to see so many Irish boys and girls willing to embrace this austere form of Christian life. Tírechán mentions some churches committed to their care ; but it is a remarkable fact that no great monastery of the sixth century can be shown to be of Patrician origin. If the monastic churches founded in Patrick's day continued to exist as monastic churches (and we have no reason to believe that they did not), they seem to have remained small and to have been absorbed in the greater monasteries which arose in the sixth century. By this time Armagh itself had adopted monastic rule, and its head was functioning in a double capacity, as bishop of Armagh and abbot of a community of monks.

As a Catholic bishop St. Patrick would teach the common doctrine of the Catholic Church. There was but one doctrine : those who did not accept it were outside the fold of the Church. When Patrick began his missionary career, the great Christological controversies were ending. The Councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431)

had been held ; during his ministry the Council of Chalcedon (451) condemned the Monophysite heresy. It is no surprise to find the Blessed Trinity mentioned constantly in Patrick's writings. How much more, then, in the sermons which he preached. The legend of the shamrock is a late invention, but it serves to focus attention on a true fact of history : the fundamental place of the Holy Trinity in St. Patrick's preaching. And the lesson was well learned. In the literature of the early Irish Church devotion to the Most Blessed Trinity is quite extraordinary.

Early in the fifth century there had been a great dispute in the Western Church about grace and merit. Pelagius, whose doctrine on grace was condemned, was a Briton ; and his erroneous teaching had not disappeared in Christian Britain by 429. Hence the Catholic doctrine on grace must have been stressed in Patrick's teaching. The familiar phrase *le congnamh De* (*Deo adjuvante*, and cognate phrases, in Latin) seems to go back in the Irish tradition to the beginnings of Christian Faith in Ireland. The *Confession* of St. Patrick is clear evidence of the saint's awareness of the power of God's grace and his own weakness.

There can be no doubt of Patrick's early connection with Gaul. That connection is further illustrated by the biblical text which we find in the *Confession* and the *Letter to Coroticus*. This text is essentially Gallican, but it has an Old Latin basis. The Vulgate Bible does not seem to have reached Ireland before the sixth century. The so-called ' Celtic family ' of biblical manuscripts give a Vulgate text, but with many Old Latin readings drawn from earlier pre-Vulgate versions common in the country. But, as Dr. Bieler has shown, there are two strange exceptions. St. Patrick's quotations from the Acts of the Apostles are almost pure Vulgate in their text, and the same may be said of his quotations from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Why Patrick used the Vulgate text for Acts and Romans is a puzzle that has not yet been explained.

Patrick's principal church was situated at Armagh. The Annals of Ulster give 444 as the date of its foundation. This may mean the final foundation, not the building of Patrick's first church at the foot of the hill. As the chief church of St Patrick Armagh became the primatial see of the whole country. Since there was no other comparable church, it ranked as a metropolitan see, and the rest of Ireland was regarded as dependent on it. Among the canons attributed to St Patrick is one which declares that ' if difficult questions arise, they are to be referred to Armagh as the see of the chief bishop of the Irish, that is of Patrick ; but if the prelates and scholars of Armagh do not know the answer, we decree that these questions are to be sent to the Apostolic See, that is to the see of Peter which has the authority of the city of Rome '. This decree is mentioned by Cumméne in a letter which he sent to Segéne, the abbot of Iona, in

630. As Professor Bury has said, such a decree would be unnecessary in the older churches of Western Europe ; but in a new church, like that of Ireland, it would be an obvious dictate of prudence to formulate such a rule. The rule itself may well go back to St Patrick himself.

In the Annals of Ulster there is a remarkable entry under the year 444 : '*et probatus est in fide catholica Patricius episcopus*'. Bury took this to mean that formal approval was given to Patrick as bishop during a visit to Rome *ad limina*. The Pope who gave the approval in 444 would be the great St Leo I. Bury is right in stressing the point that the phrase *probatus est in fide catholica* has a contemporary ring. If concocted at some later date, the meaning would have been defined more clearly. On the other hand a long journey to Rome is improbable, though not impossible. There may be another and a simpler solution. Tírechán reports that the church of Armagh gloried in the possession of most precious relics of St Peter, St Paul, St Laurence and St Stephen ; and that these had been brought from Rome to Armagh by one of Patrick's priests named Sachellus. Bury argued that Sachellus accompanied Patrick on his journey to Rome. It may well be that Sachellus was sent by Patrick as his emissary to the Eternal City, with a report on the saint's labours ; and that he brought back from Rome a formal expression of the Pope's approval. The Annals of Ulster and the Annals of Inisfallen have a similar entry for the year 443 : *Patricius in ardore fidei et doctrina Christi floruit.*

There is a note in the Book of Armagh which tells us that Patrick was like Moses in four ways. An angel spoke to him ; he fasted forty days and forty nights ; he lived to be one hundred and twenty years old ; and no man knows where his bones lie. We have discussed the question of his age already. If he was born *c.* 385 and died in 461, he would have reached the age of seventy-six years, and would have spent twenty-nine years as a missionary bishop in Ireland. These are reasonable figures. But one point seems to be certain. Patrick did not die in Armagh. Muirchú tells us that Patrick was absent from his church when he felt that death was approaching. Wishing to die in Armagh he sent for men to escort him thither. They started on their journey, but an angel was sent to order a change of plan. Patrick asked what he ought to do. 'Return unto the place whence thou camest, that is Sabal (Saul)', was the answer. And so the saint went back to Saul, and there resigned his soul to God.

Muirchú adds that there was contention about the place of his burial, and that the decision was left to two untrained oxen which brought the saint's body to Downpatrick. Thus the legend of his burial at Downpatrick (Dún Lethglaise) goes back to the seventh century, and perhaps earlier. Yet it is more likely that he was buried where he died, at Saul. Here his missionary work had begun. Here, in the simple barn which

had become a church, the saint's life would fittingly end. The clergy of Armagh may well have demanded, as Muirchú suggests, that the saint's body should be brought back to his cathedral church at Armagh ; but the privilege was beyond their power to secure.

6—The Personality of St Patrick

Person is something that is unique in every human being. It is incommunicable. Its profoundest experiences can never be fully expressed, can never therefore be fully understood by others. Hence the difficulty of biographers and historians, felt keenly from the days of Herodotus onwards. Herodotus, the ' Father of History ', is praised for the accuracy of his portrayals. Yet the admiration which he lavishes on the Athenians, because of the generous manner in which they sacrificed themselves for the common good of Greece in the war against the Persians, overlooks the fact that it was the Athenians themselves who first sought the aid of the Persians in their struggle with other Greeks. Their jealousy of those Greek states was such that they were ready to use against them Greece's chief eternal enemy. When he describes to us, then, the character of the various Greek leaders, Cleomenes, Themistocles, Polycrates, Croesus of Lydia, and still more when he deals with the Persian kings, Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes, all Orientals, we suspect that his portraits, however faithful, give no more than a very imperfect idea of the real self of each of these men.

Modern psychology, with its ' subtle and microscopic analysis of the individual consciousness and sub-consciousness ', underlines this position. Every person in himself is a small, self-contained world. All the historian can give is a large-scale impression, a few guiding lines, lacking in complexity. This can never be quite satisfactory and can obviously be very imperfect, when the person described is a saint, ever in quest of the highest values ; of values, therefore, which belong to the spiritual order, outside the range of earth. The greater, again, the personality, the greater the difficulty in depicting it. Nuances are lost and the lights that come into the field of vision cannot be adequately described in words. It will be understood, then, that the purpose of this section is limited. Many things must be left unsaid ; and what is said by way of praise might need to be multiplied many times over if full justice were to be done to St Patrick's personality.

We may begin with two fundamental human virtues, dignity and modesty. In the legends of later times, the latter virtue is not always stressed. Indeed Patrick is made to appear at times as a more than modern dictator. ' Touch me and you'll rue the day ! ' The *Confession*

and *Epistle* show him in his true colours. These sources, then, shall be followed closely and the later myths left severely alone.

He was not a lath and plaster saint. Ordinary human interests appear in his references to home and friends. He was of free-born stock, respectable people who could provide for him in a comfortable way. He had enjoyed a Christian upbringing. Britain was dear to him as his country. It formed part of the mighty Roman Empire, a connection regarded as an honour and much appreciated. To Rome, as much as to his more narrow fatherland, he was devotedly attached. Birth in Britain had brought him many opportunities of education and advancement. He had neglected these in boyhood and was worried by the loss when he had grown in wisdom and grace.

It was as a slave in Ireland that he had come to see the hidden hand of God behind the outward appearances of life. 'Thanks be to God, who had pity on my youthful ignorance and preserved me before I could distinguish good from evil. He treated me as a father treats his son.' (§ 2). That is why he cannot keep silent. God bestowed such benefits on him in the land of his captivity that he felt compelled to show his gratitude by publishing the wonders of God's goodness to every nation under heaven. (§ 3). Hence the *Confession.* He should have written long before but was held back by a false shame because of his poor education.

> I was not like others who had studied both law and letters and had advanced equally in both ; who had spoken the one language from the cradle and had learned to speak it correctly and elegantly. I had to give up my language for a foreign tongue (§ 9). Anybody can see that from the awkwardness with which I write (§ 10).
>
> I admit that I was unlettered, a fugitive (slave), unlearned, careless about the future. I was like a stone lying in the mire ; but He who is mighty came and in His mercy raised me up and placed me at the very top of the wall (Ps. 39, 2–3) (§ 12). Hence my obligation now and at all times to give thanks to God for such wonderful benefits which the mind of man cannot estimate at their true worth. (§ 12).

His vocation to be a missionary was a special heavenly grace.

> Who inspired me, despised as I was by the world, inspired me, I say, beyond all others, to be of (eternal) advantage to the people to whom the charity of Christ carried me in this life, so that eventually, if found worthy, I should serve them in humility and truth ? God himself and no other. (§ 13).
>
> How unworthy I was to receive such graces for the benefit of that (the Irish) people, after all the trials and difficulties, after captivity and the lapse of many, many years ! The Lord, indeed, gave much to me His poor slave, more than in my youth I ever hoped for or even conceived. (§ 15).

The ' much ' was his missionary vocation.

This had come to him in a mysterious way. Almighty God Himself took a step in the shaping of his future. There came the vision of the night, the man from Ireland with a bundle of letters, ' the voice of those who dwelt by the wood of Fochlad, which is nigh unto the western sea ', the pathetic appeal : ' come, holy youth, and walk once more amongst us ', its acceptance, confirmed by the cry : ' Thanks to God that after many years, the Lord heard their call.' (§ 23).

For him the answer to that call would involve endless sufferings and hardship. He would have to leave home and country again and face for life the pain of exile. To make matters worse, the exile would be among a people to whom, in the order of nature, he owed nothing ; less, indeed, than nothing, for they had done him grievous wrong. Their civilization, too, their way of living, was not his. One day he would state this fact bluntly in the words : ' And so I dwell in the midst of barbarians, a stranger and an exile for the love of God.' (Letter § 1).

Again, before he could reappear in Ireland, as a missionary, he would have to return to the school benches, to those exercises in grammar for which he had never felt any inclination, to the chagrin of seeing fellow-pupils advance while he remained lagging behind. And what would success in his main purpose bring him ? The return to Ireland. There his liberty and his life would be exposed to danger. One actual experience may be related in his own words.

> In spite of that (the presents he had given to the kings and the rewards to the princes) I was taken prisoner with my companions. That day my captors were most anxious to kill me ; but my time had not yet come. Everything we had they took. Myself they bound in irons. On the 14th day the Lord delivered me out of their hands and all that was ours was returned to us. (§ 52).

Life as a missionary in pagan Ireland would not be a bed of roses. God had called him to that life and he would therefore face it fearlessly.

But before he could reach Ireland his desire to obey God's will by spending himself in the evangelization of its people had been made the occasion of a cruel humiliation. To this he refers at various times in the *Confession,* showing that—like the humiliation of St Paul at Damascus—it was an experience that rankled. His name had been mentioned as a suitable person to lead the missionary band. His dearest friend (amicissimus meus) had been active in urging his claims. But when the matter came up for final discussion by his superiors (seniores), it was decided not to send Patrick as a bishop to Ireland, hard as that episcopate was sure to be. The terms of rejection were insulting. He was ' walked upon ' (conculcatio) that day. His hopes of ever

returning to Ireland were then rudely dashed (§ 28). ' I might as well ', he said to himself, ' put Ireland out of my head once for all.'

But consolation was on the way. That very night when he was so deeply depressed, he had a vision. To quote himself :

> On the very day that I was rejected by the aforementioned superiors, I had a vision during sleep. I saw the document that had been drawn up hurtful to my honour. Then I heard a voice saying, ' We dislike the face of so-and-so ', mentioning the name. We dislike, as if I were the apple of his eye. (§ 29). Thanks be to God who supported me then and brought it about that I was not prevented from setting out on the mission on which I had determined ; nor impeded in the work which was given me by Christ the Lord . . . My only sorrow is for my friend, against whom I heard such a reply from on high. To him I had trusted my very soul. (§§ 30, 32).
>
> Enough on this subject. But I cannot hide the gift of God bestowed upon me in the land of my captivity. There I sought Him and there I found Him, and he kept me from all evil, because of His indwelling Spirit who works in me even unto this day. I speak boldly ; but God is my witness that if I heard such a thing (the reproof of his treacherous friend) from human lips I would most likely have been silent about it for the love of Christ. (§ 33).
>
> I return thanks then, unweariedly to my God who kept me faithful to Himself in the day of temptation, so that today I offer sacrifice to Him confidently—the living sacrifice of my being to Christ, my Lord, who preserved me in all my troubles, so that I can say : Who am I, O Lord, and what is my calling that Thou shouldst co-operate with me with such divine power ? Today, among heathen peoples, I exult and glorify thy name in all places, not only when things go well, but also in my anxieties. Whenever I receive good or ill, I return thanks equally to God, who made me one of His evangelists . . . (§ 34).

These are obviously the words of an extremely holy man. The confidence with which he speaks of the vision of the night is especially noteworthy. Patrick is a simple man, speaking the simple truth, and the simple truth in his case is awe-inspiring. He was one of the elect of God, the recipient of God's special graces.

We know, therefore, from his own admission, that he was accustomed to contemplative prayer and that he received mystical favours. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the story of Patrick's long period of prayer and fasting on Cruachán Aigli, the Reek, as told by Tírechán, in the seventh century. Patrick journeyed to the top of the mountain called Cruachán Aigli and remained there for 40 days and 40 nights. Large birds flew round him in such numbers that he could not see the sky or the sea. The explanation of this phenomenon is that God had said to all the saints of Ireland, past, present and to come, ' Betake

yourselves to the space above the mountain which is higher than any other mountain in the West, and there bless all the people of Ireland,' that Patrick might see the fruit of his labours. Patrick was the father of them all and so the chorus of all the saints of Ireland had come to acclaim him.

Trials and rebuffs are the lot of all the saints. Only thus can the dross of pride be burnt away and the soul emerge in its limpid purity. The years in slavery were one such test of faith. Harder to bear was the public defamation in connection with his evelation to the episcopate. This left a searing mark that even time could not efface. It was borne, as we have seen, for God's sake. Exile itself was an enduring sorrow, but it was a sorrow welcomed :

> Whence the knowledge that, of myself, I did not possess, I who knew not the number of my days nor God ? And why later the great and saving gift, not only to know and love God, but even to lose country and relatives (for His sake) ? So the pain of exile was a great and saving gift. (§ 36)... God alone knows what exile costs me. (§ 43).

He thanks God specifically for his missionary vocation, the carrying out of which others were trying to hinder.

> God, however, helped me (in that day) and prevented me from acquiescing in their objections. His overpowering grace stood firm against them all, determined as they were to hinder my coming to preach the Gospel to the Irish, to bear insults, opprobrium, persecution, chains, and to lose my free-born status for their good. Not that I regret one whit of these sufferings. On the contrary, would that I were thought worthy to give my life for His name ! How promptly and gladly would I make that sacrifice ! (§ 37).

It is a thought that keeps recurring.

Gratitude to God may be taken as the keynote of the *Confession.* This paragraph is typical :

> I must then return thanks to God incessantly for having pitied so often my foolishness and my negligence. I must thank Him for not having been grievously angry with me when I was called to be His helper [in spreading the Faith], and when I did not give my consent at once to the vision vouchsafed me and to the Holy Spirit speaking within me. The Lord had pity on me a thousand thousand times, because He saw that I was ready (to obey Him) and that my reluctance was caused by uncertainty what to do, seeing that many were opposed to my undertaking this mission. These made difficulties behind my back saying amongst themselves : ' How can a man like that have the hardihood to undertake a dangerous mission among enemies who know not God ? ' They argued

> thus without evil intent and because, as I understand quite well, they thought I was the wrong man for the task in consequence of my defective education. Nor did I myself realize then the grace that was in me; but I see now clearly what I ought to have seen then. (§ 46).
>
> What indeed, shall I return to Him for all that He has done for me? What shall I say or what shall I promise to my Lord? I have nothing save what He has given me. 'He searcheth the heart and the reins' and knows that my one, my overwhelming desire is that He should give me to drink of His chalice, as He gave to the rest of those who love Him.

Thank God, then, for everything. Irish tradition summarizes the position when it states that *Deo Gratias* was ever on his lips.

To steer an even keel through the shoals of Irish politics has never been easy. St Patrick must have found the task of dealing with the kings and princes almost intolerably difficult. He handled it well. The choice of Armagh as his chief church was probably due to its position in the least disturbed of the major kingdoms. Strange to relate, St Patrick himself throws more light on this problem than do the later writers, Tírechán and Muirchú included. These hardly recognized the existence of a problem at all, the organization of the country, dynastic and otherwise, being to them a law of nature. They would expect St Patrick to fit into it just as they did themselves. In fact he showed skill and and wisdom in his dealings with the various rulers. There were consequently no martyrs.

> I desired to proceed cautiously in everything, lest those outside the Church should have the slightest ground for bringing complaint against me or my ministry, or the smallest reason for casting discredit on my good name. (§ 49).

Prudence, therefore, was a cardinal point in his policy.

But there were more positive *industriae,* some of them with a disturbingly modern ring. 'I used,' he remarks rather casually, 'on suitable occasions to give presents to the kings and rewards to their sons who accompanied me' (§ 52); and addressing his converts he says:

> You know from experience how much I paid to those who were judges in all the districts which I frequently visited. I reckon that I distributed to them the price of fifteen men, that you might enjoy me and I might rejoice in you in the sight of God. I am not sorry for this. Indeed my regret is that it is not greater. But I am still spending and will go on spending. (§ 52).

Some interesting conclusions may be derived from these premisses. He gave rewards to the kings and to the brehons to let him engage without interference in the works of his ministry. The 'sons of kings'

who walked with him would be princes whom he had undertaken to instruct. Coming from the Roman Empire, he and his missionaries could give them a Roman education, an advantage which the kings obviously appreciated. We shall see presently that he took the greatest care to refuse contributions in money or valuables from his converts. Yet he had funds to distribute, and on a scale sufficient to satisfy royalty. Whence did these funds come? No doubt from Auxerre and perhaps other churches in Gaul and Britain which were ready to give him material as well as personal aid. The sum mentioned is very considerable. In Ireland, to avoid blood-feuds, the law decreed that cases of homicide could be met by compensation. An *éric* might be paid to the relatives of the dead man. As these relatives were numerous, the amount which the slayer and his kin would have to pay to save the slayer from death was normally great. Multiply this by fifteen and we reach a formidable total, yet this is the amount which St Patrick proclaims that he had expended. Material and intellectual gifts (the higher education of the children) were thus offered by St Patrick to those in power that they might permit him to evangelize in their territory.

He stresses his determination to accept no material rewards from his neophytes. From this principle he never allowed himself to be deflected.

> Many gifts were offered to me with tears but I refused them all, even at the cost of offending those who offered them. Though unskilled in all things, I did my modest best to show justice towards the Christian brethren (his converts) and the nuns and the pious women who came and offered me gifts unasked ; yea, who cast portions of their jewellery on the altar. I insisted, however, on returning everything. They took umbrage I admit, at this. But what prompted me to act thus was the hope of immortality. (§ 49).
>
> In the thousands and thousands of baptisms which I performed did I ever take even half a farthing from anybody? Prove that I did and I will make return. Or when the Lord ordained through my insignificant person so many clergy and gave them spiritual office did I ever ask of any of them even the price of a sandal? Show that I did and I will make restitution with interest? (§ 50).
>
> (Instead of receiving), I spent my substance for your sakes that (the civil authorities) might accept me. (§ 51).

Like his Divine Master, speaking of mankind, Patrick could say truthfully of the Irish people that he came not to be ministered unto but to minister.

His love for his Irish flock is manifest in many places. It shines most brightly when they are in misfortune or distress. Such a calamity is commemorated for all time in his Epistle to the followers of Coroticus, the British princeling who had led a piratical expedition to Ireland with

fatal consequences for many of the recent converts. St Patrick's indignation knew no bounds. Those pirates, fellow-citizens by heredity of the holy Romans had become fellow-citizens of Satan and demons by their evil deeds.

Elsewhere he has a special word for the Irish slave-girls. The poor creatures bore, without flinching, violent threats and even terrorism. God gave many of them the grace to withstand all persecution and in the face of fierce opposition to imitate the virginity of the free-born maidens. (Conf. § 42). Such was Irish womanhood even in the days of St Patrick.

Nor were the men so very mediocre !

> How wonderful it is that Ireland which never hitherto had any knowledge of God and worshipped nothing but idols and unclean things should now become a people of the Lord and children of God ! The sons of the (pagan) Irish and the daughters of their princes have become monks and virgins of Christ. (§ 41).
>
> One case I must mention in particular, that of a blessed Irish lady of noble birth and great beauty, already grown to womanhood. I (instructed and) baptized her. A few days later she came to me with a sublime secret. She had been warned, in a heavenly message, she said, to become a nun and thus approach more nearly to God. God be praised ! Six days later she carried out with a fine enthusiasm what she had proposed (that is to say left home and friends and joined virgins like herself in a religious community). So, too, all the other virgins. Their fathers regularly object, so these poor virgins suffer persecution and undeserved ill-treatment ; but despite everything their number goes on increasing. Indeed, the number of Irish-born nuns is now beyond counting. And to them must be added the widows and continent women (§ 42):

In other words, St Patrick proclaimed to the world that the Irish were a people worth converting. They could rise to seraphic heights in the spiritual life. He prayed, therefore, that no accident might bring him ever to leave them ; he would die in their midst. (§ 43).

As a nation, they had hearkened to his word:

> Even here in this world I find myself exalted exceedingly by the Lord, though so unworthy and in no wise such that He should have been mindful of me. Poverty and failure should have been my deserts rather than success and well being ; seeing too that Christ the Lord became poor for our sakes. How wretched a creature am I compared with Him. But I do not judge myself, for I am hoping every day to be killed or flung into prison or reduced to slavery. But I fear nothing of that kind. I leave myself in the hands of Almighty God who rules everywhere. As the prophet says, ' Cast thy thought upon the Lord and He will support thee.' (§ 55).

He knows that he has worked hard for Ireland's sake. It is all nothing, of course, no merit of his, just God working through him by grace. Yet one reward he does make bold to ask :

> I pray only that it may never befall me that I should lose His people whom He has won for Himself at the ends of the earth. (§ 58).

In summary, therefore, St Patrick was a man full of the sense of his own imperfections. In the eyes of God he was, he believed, an unworthy sinner, unfit for responsible position and particularly for a mighty task like that of converting a whole people to the holy Catholic Faith. His lack of learning, in a sophisticated age, he felt grievously. He was conscious, also, of the disabilities that arose, as arise they must, from his years in captivity and slavery—the orderly development of his mind had been impeded and his lot cast in lowly places, in the company of the rude and ignorant. But the love of God and the fear of God had taken the place of parents and teachers. His steps had been guided with the tenderest care directly from on high. And so his whole life had become transfigured by the maxim : ' Not I, but the grace of God in me.' The less he was in himself, the more he could accomplish through that immeasurable, heavenly aid. Gratitude to God was thus ever on his lips. Caring nothing for the world or its interests he was prepared to serve God at all times with utter, unquestioning, reckless devotion.

> And if I ever did anything worth doing for my God, whom I love, I beg of Him grace to shed my blood for these converts and captives for His name ; and that though I should myself lack burial, though my wretched corpse should be torn limb from limb and scattered to dogs and wild beasts, or though birds of prey should devour it. Should this happen I would be quite confident that I had saved both body and soul. (§ 59).

Here is the ultimate in love. Because of it his loyalty could rise superior to every test.

He was overjoyed when, at long last, God called upon him to spend himself in doing good to others, for the second great commandment of the Law is like unto the first : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. He set himself with boundless generosity to answer that call. It carried him into exile to the uttermost ends of the earth, to our remote island, the last outpost of Europe against the Atlantic waves. Within Ireland he journeyed night and day, to the most distant places, beyond which no man dwelt. The result of his labours left him frankly speechless. The day came when he could no longer count the people whom he baptized and received into the Christian fold. They were reckoned by the thousand. Not only did so many become Christian converts,

but the younger elements among them, the boys and girls, some of princely rank, showed an insatiable longing for the higher life of religious perfection. They flocked into the monasteries and the convents, the first links in a chain that through the decades and the centuries has gone on, ever lengthening. In selfless service to the cause of God, those first neophytes set an example which no subsequent generation could excel.

His consolation, therefore, was extreme. Many had been his tribulations ; long deferred the passionate desire of his soul to bring to the Irish nation the fruits of Redemption ; bitter his rejection when the project was mooted of sending a missionary band to our neglected island ; heavy the sorrow, incalculable the danger, that faced him in that pagan stronghold ; tireless, persistent, patient, prudent his preaching ; caustic his critics, yet few in comparison with his admirers and sworn friends ; and at the end of all, when the shades of night were falling, there was the overwhelming, almost ecstatic, feeling that God in him and through him had triumphed. Ireland had been won to the Catholic Faith. By his means, with his modest person as the instrument, the conversion of heathen Ireland had been accomplished. With him, on the Last Day, the bodies of his Irish children would rise ' in the brightness of the sun, that is to say, in the glory of Christ the Redeemer ', he and they ' sons of the living God, co-heirs with Christ, formed to His likeness. With Him and through Him and in Him they would reign,' (§ 59) sharing the royalty of the King of Kings through the ages and aeons of eternity. It was worth the labour and the perspiration and the pain. It was the way by grace to glory. ' Thanks be to God now and forever.'

The Spirituality of St Patrick

NOEL-DERMOT O'DONOGHUE O.D.C.

1—The Confession as a Spiritual Document

IN the case of many of our Irish saints we have no way of knowing their inner life, their spiritual character. This is not so with St Patrick. We have an authentic, first-hand document, the *Confession,* in which he reveals his interior life clearly and fully, insofar as this is possible by way of the written word. He tells us of his vocation, of his faults and struggles, of the special graces he has received, of the words that God has spoken to him ; he reveals his heart to us : his great sensitiveness, his desire for martyrdom, his love for his children in Christ, his great love of God. It is doubtful whether he ever revealed so much of his deepest self to any of his immediate disciples. It is true that like all great apostles he was a cummunicative, open, ' radiant ' personality, unembarrassed in testifying to the faith that was in him, so full of God that he could speak about himself without the danger of becoming or appearing full of himself. Nevertheless the *Confession* gives the impression of a man who has at last decided to reveal his secret thoughts and the work of God in his soul. It is only in his old age he feels secure in that magnificent simplicity in which such self-revelation can be made with complete truth and dignity.

Whatever his feelings about it, there is no doubting the success of the *Confession* as a piece of self-revelation. There is no censorship ; he tells us everything—the sins of his youth, the visions and ' voices ' that might easily call forth the ridicule of his enemies. There is no pretence, no false note, no attempt to smooth out awkward facts or high-light acceptable ones. It is a simple statement of the plain truth.

And yet, for all this, the *Confession* is a document of quite extraordinary depth. Behind the words there is light, deep light. The more we reflect on the spiritual content of the *Confession* the more we appreciate the Saint's keen regret that his ' rusticity ' prevented him from expressing what was in his heart. It is true that the sense comes through, yet it cannot be denied that it only comes through imperfectly. To look into Patrick's great soul through the *Confession* is like looking into a beautiful church through a small dust-stained window. Yet the beauty does appear if we look long enough and carefully enough. For this we must look at the *Confession,* not as an historical document providing material for the *Life* of Patrick, but as a spiritual document revealing his inner life—this, indeed, is what it is, primarily, and what the Saint intended it to be.

2—Ascetic or Mystic?

The ascetic is the man who goes to God by his own efforts, in correspondence with ordinary graces ; the mystic is he who receives extraordinary infusions of the Divine life into his soul. Every saint, every friend of God, is an ascetic. The question as to whether every saint is a mystic is one of the most keenly disputed points in Spiritual Theology. Without going into this question it is possible to distinguish between two kinds of saints and two types of spirituality : that in which the ascetical predominates over the mystical, and that in which the mystical predominates over the ascetical. We may call the first type of sanctity *ascetical* and the second *mystical*, it being understood that there is question of predominance and by no means of mutual exclusion.

Was St Patrick an ascetic or a mystic? If we accept what might be called the traditional portrait of the saint the answer is clear : he was an ascetic. He was a man of iron will ; he lived a life of superhuman mortification. He fasted for long periods at a time, his most famous fasts being those associated with Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick. As for vigils and prayers—we are told that he got up to pray a hundred times every night. So great was his spirit of asceticism that Irish spirituality has been strongly influenced by it ever since . . .

This ascetical portrait of St Patrick seems to be accepted, not only by those who see St Patrick as an unreal and remote figure, but also by the more intelligent and scholarly biographers of the Saint. In many matters the accretions of legend have been cleared away to reveal the true Patrick ; in this most important matter we are still repeating the exaggerations and inventions of the early, uncritical biographers.

And yet for all this the one certainly authentic document that has come down to us concerning the inner life of St Patrick gives us a very different, not to say contradictory, idea of the spirituality of the Saint. *The Confession is the portrait of a mystic not of an ascetic.*[1]

There is nothing new in saying that St Patrick was a mystic. Even the most superficial reading of the *Confession* shows that he received many mystical graces. But in biographies of the Saint the mystical element is subordinated to the ascetical ; sometimes it is put away in a corner of the picture ; never is it given the centre of the portrait. Great faith, solid virtue, heroic penances, long vigils : this is the usual portrait. Where the mystical is admitted it is seen either as an extraneous ornament or (more commonly) simply as an aspect of the miraculous in the life of the Saint.

At this point it may be well to consider the nature of mystical favours more closely. The essential mystical experience is an experience of a

[1] Using the terms in the sense explained above.

special presence of God in the soul. There is, as it were, an infusion of light and warmth bringing deep joy and peace and a strong sense of detachment from all worldly joys. This is deeper and more continuous than what are called 'consolations' in prayer; besides, these latter do not of themselves produce real detachment. But what is most characteristic of the mystical is the fact that the soul is entirely *receptive* in experiencing it.

This special presence of God, which has a thousand varieties and modes, is the essence of mystical experience. Ecstasies, levitations, visions, locutions and the rest are not essential to it, though some of them may be inevitable concomitants of it in certain temperaments. Nevertheless there is a certain connexion between the mystical and what might be called the extraordinary: they are often found together. They were in fact found together in St Patrick, as we shall see.

3—Conversion and First Favours

St Patrick came of a deeply Christian family, and it seems fairly certain that he received an excellent grounding in the faith from his earliest years. Coming of a wealthy family, leaders in the Christian community, he would certainly have been carefully prepared to take as his proper place a leading place in that society when he should have come to manhood. One sees him as a very normal boy, neither extraordinarily wild nor outstandingly pious. Looking back from the high ground of his old age he tells us that he 'did not know the true God'.[1] He adds that he was not obedient to the priests who 'admonished us concerning our salvation' (C. 1). The attitude of the Saint to his far-off youth is almost exactly that of St Teresa of Avila looking back on what she considered her frivolous and sinful girlhood. We may reasonably suppose that there was in the one case as in the other much latent generosity and the beginnings of a real Christian life. Had Patrick not been taken captive he would probably have survived quite easily through the storms and stresses of adolescence and early manhood to become an outstanding member of the Christian community, following the long traditions of his family.

The boy who was taken captive at the age of sixteen had in him a great amount of Christian knowledge and Christian formation. It was natural that he should turn to God in his distress, and that this very distress should have brought him nearer to God.

[1] C.1. All references are in accordance with the chapter arrangement of Dr Bieler's edition. C=Confessio; L=Letter to Coroticus.

It is difficult to estimate the personal catastrophe which his captivity involved for Patrick. The proud young Roman becomes the boy who looks after the sheep ; the well-cared for and well-groomed son of the wealthy centurion now eats what is left over and finds his bed where he can ; the young man who was just beginning to become accustomed to the fine clothes of a Roman officials's son must now appear as a scare-crow, wearing barbarian rag clothes and cast-offs at that ; he who had been the centre of attention in a wealthy house must now obey the sons of a savage and a Pagan–there is the whip and the dungeon, should he refuse. All this was a dreadful humiliation, and the best of all preparations for the coming of the Lord into his soul.

When the Blessed Virgin Mary recalled her unique privilege of being overshadowed by God and being made the Mother of Christ she said : *The Lord hath regarded the humility of His handmaid, for He that is mighty has done great things for me* (Luke 1, 48). St Patrick uses these verses of the *Magnificat* to express the great mercy that God showed him in drawing him to Himself and choosing him for a mighty work. First came the humiliation and then the extraordinary outpourings of Divine favours. He describes this experience in a famous passage of the *Confession* :

When I had come to Ireland I tended flocks every day, and I would pray many times in the day. The love of God and the fear of God took hold of me more and more strongly ; my faith grew and my spirit became stirred up, so that in the course of a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers and almost as many in the night. This I did even when I was in the woods and on the mountain. Even in times of frost and snow and rain I would rise before dawn to pray, nor did I feel any the worse for it, nor was there any sloth in me, as there is now—for the Spirit burned brightly in me then.[1]

The concluding words give the key to the whole passage. *Tunc spiritus in me fervebat* ? the Spirit burned brightly (or fervently) in me then. It was because of the Spirit in him that Patrick was able to do these things without effort or strain. That particular manifestation of the spirit was a passing thing : he experienced it *then* ; he does not experience it *now*—' nor was there any sloth in me, as there is now '. It was because of this fire that burned within him that prayer and fasting were easy and even pleasant ; it was this same fire in the heart that made him oblivious of rain and cold.

The Saint is here describing a state of soul that in varying modes and degrees is found in the lives of many saints and servants of God. It is the stage of first conversion, the time of first favours. Where this state is very profound it usually involves mystical graces. Where it is not so profound, there is simply fervour and consolations. In Patrick's case

[1] *Quia tunce spiritus in me fervebat.* Dr Philbin translates : B'é an Spiorad a bhi ag lasadh ionam an trath sin fé ndeara é. Note the capital *S* in Spiorad.

it seems fairly certain that there was a strong infusion of mystical grace. In other words, he was ' taken over ' by the Spirit, possessed by God. He did not have to strive or do violence to himself in order to live a life of prayer and penance. ' My spirit became stirred up ', that is to say, came under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God. While this state lasted prayer and penance was so far from being a burden that the greatest penance of all would be to be unable to do penance. We might say that while the soul is in this state of Divine inebriation penance is a mystical rather than an ascetical phenomenon. The point is important, for this passage is frequently used to prove that St Patrick was primarily an ascetic.[1] It is true that Patrick led a life of great self-denial but there is no real evidence that he kept the full measure of these physical penances all his life. In fact the evidence of the *Confession* is the other way, for he speaks of his ' present laziness '. He was always a mortified man, but it is almost certain that his greatest mortifications in later years came from the pain of exile, and especially from the effect of criticism on his very sensitive temperament.

This time of favours did not last, but it left a lasting effect. It left Patrick a man completely dedicated to God. It remained as a life-long habit of contemplation. It must also have left a special sweetness, purity and gentleness as if his whole person, the body as well as the soul, carried always the fragrance of a certain Divine anointing. Perhaps this is the impression Secundinus is trying to convey in his *Hymn to Patrick*. Certainly this quality shines through the rough texture of the *Confession,* giving youth and freshness to the words, revealing the childhood heart of the great Apostle.

We do not know how long this inundation of graces lasted. At first reading of the text we might get the impression that it was co-extensive with the period of his captivity, and this lasted six years. But a closer examination of the text gives rather the impression of two spiritual periods dividing the time of his captivity. During the first period the Lord was drawing Patrick to Himself, opening his soul to a sense of his sins and of the Divine love and mercy (C. 2). Thus he began to take the first steps in prayer, and ' the love of God and the fear of God took hold of him '. The youth alone with his flocks went through a kind of noviciate in which the Lord was his guide. He did not have to be *instructed* supernaturally, for he was already well grounded in the faith. Indeed all the normal means for spiritual progress were present : knowledge, solitude, humility and simplicity of life. And so he advanced in the ways of ordinary prayer until the Spirit came to possess him

[1] The same thing happens so often in the biographies of Saints that it might be called the Hagiographer's Fallacy. It consists in seeing the whole of a life in terms of a certain phase, usually this early ' penitential phase '. You will never find it in the *autobiographies* of Saints—that is one reason why the Saints who have written autobiographies seem more human and imitable.

deeply and constantly. It is doubtful whether he could tell when this happened, for ' no man knows whence (the Spirit) comes or whither He goes ' (John 3, 8). It is likely that the preparatory stage took at least a year—the text gives the impression of a gradual process—but we cannot be sure.

Speaking of certain mystical states St John of the Cross says that they are given in special abundance to those who are to be the father of many souls. It is probable that the great graces Patrick received during his captivity were preparing him to be the father of the Irish Church. They left him humble and strong, full of the Spirit. They were not simply graces of personal perfection, but truly apostolic graces as well, though he could have no notion of this at the time.

4—Trials and Sufferings

Our Blessed Lord said to His apostles : *Every branch in me that beareth fruit, the Father will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit . . . The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you.* (John, 15, 2 and 20). Here we have two principles of deep suffering—that sweet and healthgiving suffering that is part of the following of Christ. The soul must suffer in being purified, in being pruned and cleansed for new growth. The grain of wheat must die in order that the fruit may come. All the dark clouds must be dispelled until the soul is all light, a clear reflection of God. But this light has to shine in the darkness and the darkness does not comprehend it—this is the second kind of suffering. The more the soul is refined unto Christ, the more it suffers from the spiritual coarseness of those around it. It cannot escape this but must shine bravely in the darkness, accepting everybody, suffering everybody, as Christ suffered everybody, as Christ suffers the soul itself.

Patrick's first experience of the Divine presence was preceded by the physical and moral sufferings of his captivity. As these favours were but *first* favours so these sufferings were but *first* sufferings. He was not yet perfect; he had still a long way to go to come to the fullness of Christ. When he made his escape from slavery he carried with him, all unknown to himself, the seeds of future suffering. He had spent the six most important years in his life from the point of view of education far from all instruction ; it is hardly likely that he opened a book once in all that time. In the eyes of his contemporaries—his cousins and neighbours among whom he grew up and the members of the society to which he belonged—he was an ignoramus, and he would remain an ignoramus

to the end of his days. This would not have been so important had Patrick become a soldier or a farmer, or if he had given himself to worldly ways. But his experiences in Ireland had left an indelible mark on him, an orientation towards the sanctuary, towards the monastic and sacerdotal life. In this setting he was a misfit, a man who could speak Latin no better than a schoolboy, who was ignorant of Virgil and Cicero, who had no acquaintance with the world of ideas and educated discussion. We do not have to guess whether Patrick suffered deeply from this great disadvantage. We know he did, for it is written clearly on almost every page of the *Confession.* He returns to it again and again, as if it were something that was seldom far from his mind.

Like every great man Patrick had in him a great deal of that mettlesome energy which the Scholastic moralists called *vis irascibilis*—the force of anger. This is abundantly clear from the *Letter to Coroticus,* and anybody with the least perception of temperament in the style of a writer will find it all through the *Confession.* It is in such temperaments especially that humility shines forth most splendidly, for humility is a quality of the will, and consists precisely in the power to control this force of anger—it is only where there is a great force to control that there is great control. The force of anger is itself a creature of God and must be taught to obey ; where this force is very strong it can be thoroughly dominated only by a will deeply united to God, greatly detached from selfishness. This lesson is learnt in bitterness and anguish through deep humiliations. The roots of selfish assertiveness run so deep that it seems at times as if the whole soul is being destroyed. It seems almost certain that Patrick underwent this process of purification during the years between his captivity and his return to Ireland.

He would have been upbraided for his ' rusticity ' not, of course, by the really intelligent and learned people around him but by the half-educated, the pompous and pretentious people. He must have seen through these people, and suffered deeply from that sense of indignity which the noble mind feels when it is asked to look up to what is ignoble and spurious. Through all this he was acquiring that strength of will which is such a beautiful thing—the will that reflects the Will by which all things are made and loved.

But the time came when this suffering reached a crisis. Patrick had been named as a missionary Bishop to the Irish, when some of his elders began a campaign of talk against him. It seems very probable that they made much of his rusticity and were moreover convinced that he was far too junior. They must have been very bitter against him, for they had recourse to an incredibly mean shift to discredit him. One of them had received a confidence from Patrick concerning a sin of his youth. This he now made public, and the Saint was in disgrace. (It would seem that the revelation was made in Patrick's absence and

was grossly exaggerated). The accuser was the Saint's dearest friend—' my very dear friend to whom I entrusted even my soul ' (C. 32).

The wound was so deep that Patrick confesses quite simply that he was scarcely able to bear it. He felt strongly impelled to turn back, to give up his vocation, to become entirely disheartened, to relinquish the spiritual way he had chosen. ' I was greatly impelled ', he tells us, ' to fall away here and forever '. (C. 26). But the Lord upheld him and he survived the storm. Indeed the Lord made Patrick's cause His own in the most tender way, and so the trial issued in a deeper understanding of God's love and goodness.

But it was a terrible trial while it lasted. It might in fact be called Patrick's Passion. He had been betrayed in to the hands of his enemies . . . And so his mission to Ireland was marked with the Sign of the Cross.

In this trial the two aspects of Christian suffering appear clearly. The gold was being tried, the weapon was being forged, the branch was being purged. But the deeper, more Christ-like suffering was also present. Patrick was being ' hated without cause ' (John, 15, 25). As always happens, those who had in their own hearts been corrupted by the leaven of the Pharisees found the most godly reasons for their condemnations. Their attitude would not change later on when the success of his Irish mission became known. Patrick would remain to the end of his days ' despised by many '. (C. 1). The heart of Christ in him had to suffer both from the brutality of Pagans and the jealousy of Christians. Thus he was indeed a light that shone among uncomprehending darkness, not so much the darkness of Paganism, but the darkness of the ' lordly rhetoricians ' among his own brethren. The Pagan Irish accepted him in large numbers as the Gentiles accepted Christ and St Paul ; and he shared with Christ the experience of being despised and set at nought by the proud and vain churchmen among his own people.[1]

It would take too long to analyse the other sufferings of the Saint—his physical sufferings, the constant danger of death, the great catastrophe that led him to write the Letter to Coroticus. Nor is there space to speculate on these final purifications of which Eugene Mullen speaks in his *Ode to St Patrick*.[2] Enough has been said to show that Patrick's sanctity was sealed with the Sign of the Cross—the only sign of genuineness.

[1] ' The obloquy which was cast upon Patrick is reflected in by-names that were given to him. The very meaning of these names were forgotten in the time of the seventh-century writers. One of these by-names was Succet, a word of British origin meaning " swineherd ". Another was Magunios which meant "the slavering". That this was a current by-name for Patrick in Britain is proved by the fact that it was known to Nennius in its later Welsh form of Maun '. Eoin MacNeill, *St Patrick* (Sheed & Ward, 1934), p. 82.

[2] ' The day of thine illumination Ended, the bosom of thy peace was gored,/And thou wert cast into exterior gloom:/The arid waste and wilderness of spirit,/Where thou wert fire-tried through long sojourn.'. *Ode to St Patrick on the Occasion of his Centenary, 1932.* (The Talbot Press, p. 14).

5—Visions and Revelations

It has been said above that while visions, ecstasies and other extraordinary phenomena are by no means essential to the mystical experience of God they frequently accompany it. This was so in the case of St Patrick, These extraordinary phenomena take a special and characteristic form in each soul that receives them. In the case of Patrick the characteristic form was the *responsum divinum,* the divine message. And it would seem that these messages usually came to him through the medium of dreams. It was in this way that he was told that his time of captivity was coming to an end (C. 17) that his ship was ready (Ibid.), that his second captivity would last two months (C. 21), that the Irish were calling him back to convert them (C. 23), that the Lord was displeased with his accusers (C. 29). Many times during his missionary labour this same Divine voice warned him about dangers that lay in wait for him (C. 35).

This kind of Divine direction does not come without much inner conflict and searchings of the heart. Looking back in his old age it was easy for Patrick to recognise the Divine guidances and to see that the messages were from God. It was by no means easy at the time. It is sometimes thought that this kind of guidance diminishes faith. This is not true, as is clear from many passages in Scripture, especially from the contrast between the strong faith of the Blessed Virgin and the imperfect faith of Zachery in Luke, 1 and 2. What is true is that an *attachment* to such signs is a failure in faith.[1] God's ways are so much beyond the ways of men that a real glimpse of God's plans can be accepted and understood only by a soul that has come to live by faith, the soul that is not tied down by worldly desires, or intimidated by worldly forces, or limited by worldly horizons. This is the faith commended so highly in the eleventh chapter of the *Epistle to the Hebrews.* It is the faith not only of Abraham receiving God's angels for what they were, but also of Rahab 'receiving the spies with peace' (Hebrews, 11, 31). Clearly it is not something in the will alone ; it involves discernment as well, the power to discern the Divine messenger and the Divine message. Above all it involves the power of bringing another world to birth, of sacrificing all to this new world which as yet has no substance beyond our faith in it ; and so faith is the substance of things to be hoped for. Faith is not so much belief in the past as belief in the future . . .

It may be said that Patrick was a man of dreams, as was the glorious St Joseph, and the first Joseph, the son of Jacob. In their dreams

[1] 'The soul must never presume to desire visions, even though they be of God ; for, if it desire to receive them, faith grows gradually less.' St John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* Book II, c. xi (tr. Peers, I, p. 99).

these men were taught the mysterious designs of God ; they were makers of a new world. They received no more light than was needed to take the next step forward ; and so they could live only by faith in God's great design, faith in the future, faith in something completely new and unforeseeable. They had to live here and now in this world that had not yet come into being. What little substance it had ! No more than a few dreams in the night ! Against this stood the world around them in its inescapable concreteness, its down-to-earth demands and necessities, its constant affirmation that that other new world was but an illusion. Here is a savage warlike people whose law is the sword, whose kings are under the influence of Pagan priests, who have no sympathy with Patrick or his race—yet this entire nation is to be converted to Christ : this was the burden and direction of the Divine messages that Patrick received, and he could only believe them because he was, as it were, saturated by the sense of God's power, goodness and mercy. He knew God and he knew that God was with him. Because he had been humbled, because the whole domain of the feelings in him was entirely subjugated to God's will, because obedience had taken the place of self-will—because, in a word, he was a fitting instrument in God's hands, he was beyond the reach of illusion. Were he not humble, he might well fool himself, or Satan might have led him astray by false visions. It seems likely that his critics in Britain saw him as deluded, as an *exalté,* an ignorant man impressing ignorant people. They could not distinguish the genuine thing from the spurious, for they lacked the light that is given only to the humble. The Spirit was not with them, but with Patrick ; the future was not with them but with Patrick.

6—The Holy Spirit

There is one vision recounted in the Confession which stands in a place apart. It is that in which the Saint finds the Holy Spirit praying within him. The Spirit ' prayed strongly with groanings ' he tells us. (C. 25). He was at first astounded by this strange force within him, that seemed at once within him and above him. ' I was amazed and could not make out who it was that prayed within me ' (Ibid.). It was only towards the end of the experience that he understood it was the Holy Spirit and that he recalled St Paul's words : *The Spirit helps our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.* (Rom. 8, 26).

This is one of the most remarkable passages in Christian hagiography. The Apostle of Ireland has been given exactly the same experience as that which the Apostle of the Gentiles recounts in this famous and rather mysterious passage of the Epistle to the Romans. It is true that

every pious soul feels the voiceless stirrings of the Holy Spirit within it, leading it into solitude at times, or suggesting some good work, or drawing it towards the presence of God within it. In this way the words of St Paul are verified. And yet the experience is not *exactly* the same as that of St Paul. But St Patrick's experience is so exactly that of St Paul that the text of the *Confession* serves as a commentary and explanation of the text in Romans.

It is not possible to read the *Confession* with any attention without being struck by the important place accorded to the Third Divine Person in its pages.[1] Patrick is constantly ' led by the Spirit ', ' bound in the Spirit ', fortified by the Spirit. The Saint is obviously one of those Elias-figures, who, like John the Baptist, come ' in the spirit and power ' of the great Prophet of Mount Carmel and Mount Thabor. Every soul in whom God lives by grace has the Holy Spirit within it, and in this sense St Patrick was full of the Spirit. But these Elias-figures possess the Spirit in another way as well, in what is called a charismatic way, as a grace given not simply for their own sanctification but to do some great work for God. The Spirit may be said to descend upon them, or to work through them as by an instrument. At such times they are men of tremendous power and presence, breaking down the shrines of idols, denouncing the vices of kings, converting and baptising thousands of people. At other times they have to suffer deep dereliction and sorrow, sharing in Gethsemani and the forty days in the desert.

The Holy Spirit is Creative Love ever working in men's hearts and in the Church, *Creator Spiritus*. It is the Creating Spirit that St Patrick found praying within him. The great Irish Church was being born through that prayer, a new world was coming into existence in place of the old Pagan world. To understand the profound meaning of the Saint's experience it is necessary to place it in the context of that tremendous eighth chapter of Romans in which we find St Paul's brief description of his own experience. This chapter is a hymn of triumph to celebrate the victory of Christ over Satan and death, and to glorify the new world of the Resurrection. But the sense of triumph and glory is balanced and chastened by the theme of hope and anxious expectation. Not man alone, but every creature, the whole world of nature, is on tiptoe of expectation of the new world that has already appeared in the glorified body of Christ. But neither man nor nature really knows how to prepare the way for the coming of this new world. And so it comes that *the Spirit helpeth our infirmity, for we know not what we should pray for, but the Spirit Himself asketh for us.*

Here we are looking into the depths of Patrick's noble and simple soul. He is the man whom the Lord has chosen to be the bearer of His Holy Spirit to the Irish. To this destiny he had to accommodate

[1] In his Index of words and terms Dr Bieler has *Spiritus Sanctus—passim* (everywhere).

himself in sighs and tears and yearnings. For a man does not bear the spirit as a horse bears a burden : the Spirit is borne spiritually, and the soul has to be greatly refined and purified to bear it. The Holy Spirit will not, cannot enter every abode to possess it in this eminent way. This work of preparation was done through the great inundation of mystical graces during the years of captivity and through the deep humiliations and contradictions that came later. And so Patrick bore the spirit strongly and sweetly, humbly and gently, tenderly and lovingly. Within him were the deeps, the great ocean, and the Creating Spirit moved over these tranquil waters, bringing a new world into existence.

7—St Patrick and the New World

It is clear from the *Confession* and the *Letter to Coroticus* that St Patrick, like many of his contemporaries, thought that the end of the world was near. It was the time of the breakdown of the Empire, and it seemed impossible that the world could continue without it. Patrick was almost certainly influenced by this general feeling, but he was more influenced by the significance of his own work. He had preached the Gospel to the people who lived at the ends of the earth, and did not the Lord say that the end would come when the Gospel had been preached to all nations (Matt, 24, 14) : ' Behold we are witnesses to the fact that the Gospel has been preached in those regions beyond which no man lives.' (C. 34).

One passage in the Old Testament had special significance for St Patrick—the last chapter of the Prophecy of Malachy. He quotes it in reference to his converts in the *Letter to Coroticus* (L. 17), but the really striking reference to it is in his account of Satan's attack on him and his release from the pressure and horror of the attack through the invocation of Elias and the advent of Christ in the form of a great sun shining in the Heavens. (C. 20). The description clearly echoes that last chapter of Malachy in which Christ is referred to as the sun of justice and Elias as Christ's forerunner.

Every great Apostle is an Elias who prepares the way for the coming of Christ into men's hearts. In this sense Patrick was indeed an Elias-figure. Did he also see his vocation as that of a herald of the Second Coming of Christ ? Certainly he did so in the sense that his work among the Irish was part of the ultimate preparation for Christ's coming. It seems likely that beyond that he could not see clearly. Looking back from our point of vantage we can see that Patrick was in fact the herald of a new world. Soon the Empire would be completely submerged

and the time would come when darkness would descend on Europe. In those days Europe would look for light to the race that Patrick had converted at the rim of the world. A new world was indeed being born through Patrick. The Lord was to visit His people again, and Patrick was the herald of this new visitation.

Conclusion

The portrait that emerges from the *Confession* is that of a gentle and seraphic soul. There is no doubt as to Patrick's strength and tenacity of will, but this was not his dominant trait. What drew people towards him was that unmistakable sweetness and gentleness that comes from the anointings of the Holy Spirit. His eyes must have seemed (to those about him who had spiritual discernment) the eyes of a child, clear, wistful, ever kindling anew to the vision of the good God within. He was a child too in that radiant chastity that is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit—not a strained and tense continence but the glow of an all-pervading charity possessed in peace. He was a man on fire with God and men came to him for warmth.

He was a great Apostle, a man sent to men by God. He spoke not of himself but as God's messenger, having no other speech than that of Scripture. Through deep suffering, through great yearnings, he brought to birth a new world, giving it his own spirit. This world—the Irish Church—lives on and is today full of hope and growth. It was founded on Patrick's humility, and it has seen centuries of incredible humiliation. The whole world wonders at its strength and glory ; it keeps its secret locked in its heart—the knowledge that humility is all, for the good Lord does the rest.

It is no mere fancy to feel that the spirit of Patrick lives on in the Irish Church, for it is of the nature of charismatic graces—as against personal graces—that they can be passed on from master to disciple and from one generation to the next. This spirit is not simply the spirit of Patrick but the Holy Spirit that found in Patrick a living tabernacle, accommodating Itself to this dwelling-place, and vitalizing the Irish Church from generation to generation.

Ireland and The Holy See

Carolingian Renaissance to the Gregorian Reform[1]

JOHN RYAN

'EVERY age has known its Irish emigrants.' For the time with which we are dealing they were not so much emigrants as pilgrims, men whose sojourn away from home was not intended to be permanent, though the category of emigrants was likewise well represented. Some of these left their country from sheer love of adventure, but the great majority seem to have gone from motives of religion. Here the great attraction was Rome. Now and then the Irish pilgrim extended his journey to Jerusalem, but this was rare enough. The goal on which Irish eyes were fixed was the Eternal City. Its drawing power never for a moment waned. St Columban, he tells us himself, would have sacrificed almost anything to kneel at the tombs of the Apostles. A multitude of his countrymen, as the years went by, were more fortunate than he. They crossed the stormy seas, made their way along the dangerous roads, sailed up the Rhine, or down the Rhone, crossed the Alpine peaks and if all went well found themselves at last in the old St Peter's and St Paul's, amply rewarded for their months of toil and suffering.

Innsbruck means the bridge across the river Inn. If we follow that river northwards to Bavaria we come to the ancient monastery of Rot, which treasured the relics of two saints, Marinus and Annianus, carried thither from a neighbouring village in the first half of the 8th century. They were Irishmen who had settled in Bavaria on their way back from Rome. Even if we are sceptical about many incidents in their story, the mention of Rome is significant ; it was the place of pilgrimage to which, in fact, pious men from Ireland were always going.

We do not know whether St Vergil of Salzburg was ever in Rome, but we do know that he was once summoned thither. This was when complaint was made about his teaching by St Boniface. Vergil taught the sphericity of the earth and the existence of Antipodes. The Pope of the day, St Zacharias, a Greek by birth (741-752), was himself a distinguished student of geography. A discussion with St Vergil on the theories mentioned would probably have given him great intellectual enjoyment. Some two or four years before this date Vergil had written

[1]For Part I see *Studies*, Spring 1960, pp. 1—16.

to Pope Zachary complaining of the action of St Boniface in having certain persons rebaptized because of an alleged imperfect form used by an illiterate priest. On this point the Pope accepted Vergil's view : he informed St Boniface that in the circumstances a repetition of the sacrament was unnecessary. Thus connections between the Irish bishop of Salzburg and the Pope in the mid-eighth century are a matter of routine. And the Pope for Vergil as for St Boniface is the Pope, the ultimate or highest peak in the Church's hierarchy of authority.

Sedulius Scottus of Liège, the greatest Hiberno-Latin poet of the ninth century did not, as far as we know, ever make the journey to Rome. But that was not from ignorance of Rome nor from lack of interest in the Apostolic See. His two chief patrons were the bishops Hartgar and Franco of Liège. When Hartgar made the journey to Rome, *ad limina apostolorum,* Sedulius celebrated the event in classic verse : ' If you leave us, O Patron dear, where shall we look for consolation ? Nevertheless go, alme Pater, over the snowy fields and ice-covered roads ; St Andrew guide thee to his brother's shrine '.[1] Rome is the *urbs* par excellence, the Eternal City, to which all eyes turn. In the next poem the poet appeals to the Muses, to the daughter of Sion, to Candida Roma, to Father Tiber, to send his bishop, Hartgar, back in safety to Liège. ' O land of Italy, rich in fruit and olive green, send him safely back to us'. Sedulius regrets that he could not go to Rome himself, but he sends the Muse of poetry, Calliops, in his stead. *Ad Petrum primum, quia primus pastor habetur/Caelestis Solimae claviger atque potens.* The Bishop went first to Peter (in the person of his successor, the Pope) because he is the first or chief pastor and the all-powerful holder of the keys of the heavenly Jerusalem. The Pope received Bishop Hartgar graciously

> *Claviger astrisoni tunc inquit Petrus Olimpi*
> *Altithronus vestras audit in astra preces*

—an assurance to Hartgar that Almighty God in heaven heard his prayers. Sedulius was but one, if the most articulate, of a large Irish colony at Liège. Many of these he mentions by name : Fergus, Flann (Blandus), Diarmait, Buachaill. He and they are part of the Irish people, Scottigenae. Thus for the Irish of the ninth century at home and abroad the primacy of the Holy See is a simple axiom, obvious as the sun at noon. It is part of their concept of the world.

A greater man than Sedulius was Johannes Scottus, John the Irishman, generally known as Eriugena. In 757 a copy of the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite was sent as a gift by Pope Paul I to Pippin the Short. A translation of sorts was made by Hilduin, abbot of Saint-Denys beside

[1] *Inclitus Andreas Simonis ad edita Petri/Ad fratrem frater vos ferat incolumes. Te praesente, Pater, laetabitur aurea Roma/Et spes urbis eris, turris et Ecclesiae.*

Paris, for Louis the Pious. This translation from the Greek was unsatisfactory and about 858 Charles the Bald asked Eriugena to translate the writings afresh. For this he had been prepared by his study of Neoplatonism. Yves (Ivo) of Chartres preserves in his Decretum a letter of Pope Nicholas I to Charles the Bald asking that the translation of the works of the Areopagite recently made by a certain man John of Irish nationality be sent to Rome for examination. Anastasius, the papal librarian, a man of Greek race, was commissioned to examine and correct Eriugena's text. The corrections seem to have been few for in a letter of Anastasius to Charles the Bald, 23 March 860, he praises Eriugena in these words :

> It is a wonderful thing that a barbarian, living at the ends of the earth, who might be supposed to be as far removed from the knowledge of Greek as he is from the lands where Greek is spoken, has been able to understand such ideas and translate them into Latin. I refer to John the Irishman (Scottigena) whom I have learned from report to be a holy man.

This was but one and by no means the most important of Eriugena's works. What is interesting to us in this study is the fact that it went for censorship (without any complaint from the author) to the Apostolic See. In matters of dogma it was accepted as a principle that Rome must have the final word.

I have mentioned Hartgar, Bishop (840–54) of Liège, and patron of Sedulius and his countrymen. When Hartgar died he was succeeded as bishop by Franco (854–90), a prelate who equalled, if he did not excel, his predecessor as a patron of the Irish colony. It is therefore not surprising to find letters addressed to him by other Irishmen, in this case pilgrims on their way to or from Rome. These letters number four. The first asks merely for help ; the second asks assistance for ' a poor Irish pilgrim returning weary from Rome ' ; the third asks for help for an old Irish priest whose feet have given way ' so that he cannot continue the journey to Rome with his brethren ' ; the fourth asks that property stolen from the writer, an Irish priest, by persons of the Liège diocese who were on the boat with him on the way home from Rome, be restored. The weary traveller of the second letter says that he is neither a grammarian nor an expert Latin speaker, from which we may draw two conclusions, that the Irish on the Continent were known in general to be learned men, and, secondly, that not only the scholars but very ordinary people as well, made the journey to Rome, even in the ninth century. In the third letter the reference to the ' brethren ' will be noted. Evidently the pilgrims from Ireland were quite a group. The priest whose swollen feet makes it impossible for him to walk further and who therefore seeks admission to some house or institution promises to repay his benefactors with masses and prayers. If the century is the ninth, the sentiments are those of Irish Catholics through all the centuries since. Finally, the writer

of the fourth letter (Electus Scottigena) gives the bishop a list of the stolen property. It includes clerical garments, vestments and four trousers of Irish cut (*iv osas Scotticae vestis*).

It is a truism that the ninth century was rendered ghastly in Ireland by the incursions of the Northmen. They were everywhere, looting, murdering, burning. How extraordinary then to find that pilgrimage to Rome was not interrupted ! It is a fact that towards the end of the century the attacks weakened : Irish historians recognize an interlude which they call the Forty Years of Rest, but we have evidence of pilgrimage in the earlier and admittedly supremely dangerous decades. Thus the continuation of the *Casus Sancti Galli*, or history of St Gall, relates that when Grimaldus was abbot (841–72) an Irish bishop named Marcus, returning from Rome, visited St Gall. With him was his nephew, his sister's son, called in Irish Moengal, a man of very great learning in the profane and sacred sciences. Both stayed in St Gall for some time. Then the nephew asked permission to stay permanently as a monk in the community. Permission was granted. His name was changed by his fellow monks to the more familiar form, Marcellus. In due course he became head of the monastic school. His pupils contributed much to the development of mediaeval hymnody. The bishop, before he left for home, distributed horses and mules to various people ; and made gifts of books, gold and vestments to the monastery. Uncle and nephew on their journey from Rome had many fellow-travellers and it is not extravagant to suggest that some of them were Irish like themselves. The picture then is striking, a flow of pilgrims to Rome from Ireland, with little or no interruption, during the ninth century, among them bishops, priests, and laity, some, like the bishops, extremely well-to-do, some in poverty whether from necessity or from choice.

That the picture is substantially true to life appears from a charter of Charles the Fat, c.882. He granted to the monastery of St Gall the Irish monastic house on Mount St Victor, with the adjoining church and other property. At the same time he made grants for the maintenance on Mount St Victor of a hospice for 12 pilgrims on their way to Rome. Combining the two charters we conclude that the purpose of the Irish house on Mount St Victor was to give help to pilgrims on their way over the Alps to Rome and that the result of the royal charters was to place the duty of support henceforth on the abbey of St Gall. In other words, the administration of the trust was given a permanent and more satisfying basis. Were it not for this change we would be ignorant of the existence of the Irish house on Mount St Victor. Its presence there adds to the already large body of evidence for the popularity in the ninth century —no less than earlier and later—of Irish pilgrimage to Rome.

An interesting story in this connection comes from the Life of St Findan of Rheinau. (*Vita S. Findani MGH., SS.RR.Germ.XV*, p. 502 ff.).

The Life was written about the year 900 and the incident to which I am about to refer took place about the year 840. Findan was a Leinsterman, who had the misfortune to live near the Irish Sea. This was infested with Viking ships. In the course of a raid the crews captured Findan's sister and carried her off to their fleet to sell her later as a slave. We can imagine the distress of her family. At her father's request Findan very courageously agreed to follow the pirates to their lair and try to secure his sister's release by an offer of money. When they heard what his purpose was they laughed and seizing Findan himself put him in irons. Having carried him to their ships they left him without food for a day and a night. Immediately afterwards however, they decided to negotiate and the girl was liberated when the high price demanded was paid.

But the respite was not for long. Findan's house was attacked again by the Vikings and he escaped with his life almost by miracle. On a third occasion he was not so fortunate. This time he was captured, taken to the ships and handed over as part of the booty to one of the Viking leaders. When this man proceeded to return to Norway, he took Findan and other captives with him. Somewhere in the Orkneys they landed and Findan made a determined effort to escape. In this he succeeded ; the ship had to sail away after fruitless efforts to find his hiding place. But his troubles were far from over. The island was barren and uninhabited and cut off from all other places by a long stretch of water. For three days Findan walked round and round, living on herbs. In his predicament he made a vow : should he reach safety he would go on pilgrimage to Rome and say goodbye for ever to the allurements of the world. Thus psychologically encouraged he committed himself to the waves and, strange to relate, covered easily the long distance to land. After two days he reached human habitations. The kind people who succoured him brought him to their bishop. This prelate had made his studies in Ireland and Findan was welcomed with open arms. There he stayed for two years. Then, with a number of friends of like mind, he made his way on foot by Tours, Germany, Lombardy to Rome. If he arrived, as is possible, soon after 846, he would have found the city in disorder and chaos, for in the year mentioned it was plundered by the Saracens. Leo IV, who became Pope in 847, had to fortify the area round the Vatican, which thus became the *urbs Leonina*. Findan left Rome for Germany and spent the rest of his life there, first as a cleric, then as a monk, finally as an *inclusus* at Rheinau in a little cell within the basilica dedicated to Our Lady. After 22 years, he died, leaving a great reputation for sanctity. His way to the honours of the altar had begun with a visit to Rome.

The hardships of the journey are easy to conceive, especially if it were made on foot, the ideal method of progress for pilgrims. Hence the weary traveller expected immediate spiritual recompense. This unfortunately did not always come. A codex in the Dresden Library which contained

the Greek text of the 13 epistles of St Paul with an interlinear version in Latin (*Thes. Pal. II,* 296) contains also a quatrain in Old Irish written by a man whose wayfaring had obviously ended in disappointment :

Techt do Róim
mór saído, becc torbai
In Rí chondaigi hi foss
mani-m-bera latt, ni fogbai.

Going to Rome
much labour, little profit ;
The King (of Kings) whom thou seekest here,
unless thou bring Him with thee thou findest
Him not !

This codex had been traced to the circle of Sedulius Scottus at Liège ; indeed Traube believed that it was written by Sedulius himself. The quatrain might, of course, represent the heartbreak of the pious soul in any generation, the realization that even in the catacombs faults and imperfections of human nature cannot be sloughed off and an all-consuming love of God conjured, as it were, from the shrines and stones. But the likelihood is that the lines are an echo of some deep positive obstacle to piety. One thinks of 844, when Rome was thrown into confusion by the election of a Pope, Sergius II, and an anti-Pope, Johannes ; of 846, when the Saracens plundered the tombs of the Apostles ; of 855, when once again an anti-Pope opposed the canonically elected Pope Benedict III (855–858). A pilgrim to Rome in the years mentioned would see much to cause him disgust. On the death of Benedict III a period of relative peace and prosperity began. Nicholas I (858–867) is generally regarded as the most eminent Pope since the illustrious Gregory the Great ; and his immediate successors Adrian II (867–872) and John VIII (872–882) were men of ability and distinction. Thus the circumstances point to the writing of the quatrain within the period 844–855. From the linguistic point of view such a date is possible.

In Ireland we have three major martyrologies, the Félire Oinguso, the Félire of Tallaght and the Félire of Gorman. The last-mentioned composed his martyrology between 1166 and 1174. He says that Oengus took the matter in his martyrology from the Martyrology of Tallaght. This would make Tallaght the earliest of the three. All agree that it was compiled about the year 800. Now it is as much a Roman as an Irish martyrology. The proportions may be judged from the fact that the Roman Index of Persons fills twenty-one pages and the corresponding Irish Index thirty-one pages.

For the tenth century the sources are meagre. This is easy enough to understand. In the first place the period 915–c.950 was marked in Ireland

by the recrudescence of Viking activity. Munster had been grievously weakened by the defeat of its King, Cormac mac Cuilennáin, at the Battle of Belach Mugna in 908. The Northmen seized their opportunity. Waterford was founded about 916 ; Limerick about 922. Niall Glúndub, the High-King, ancestor of the O Neills, was checkmated by them in south Tipperary in 918 and killed by them in a battle beside Dublin in 919. The south of Ireland was then at their mercy. Donnchad Donn, the High-King from 919 to 944, was perhaps the most inactive and the most ineffective ruler who ever sat on the throne of Tara. The northern Uí Néill did provide a champion in the person of Muirchertach, son of Niall Glúndub, but he was killed in a skirmish with the Norse in 943. For the first half of the century therefore Ireland was in a most disturbed state. The second half of the century saw a great change. This is connected with the rise of the Dalcassians in Munster and particularly with the rule of a great statesman and military leader, Brian Boruma.

That is half the picture. The other and still more distressing half is provided by Rome. It is painful even still to read of the degradation to which the Holy See was reduced by the local nobility and their egregious women-folk. This dreadful situation began to improve with the foundation of the new Holy Roman Empire of the German nation. Otto I deposed the unworthy John XII in 963. Yet when Otto III died near Rome in 1002 the city was in a state of uproar and rebellion. The efforts of Otto I, Otto II, and Otto III during a period of forty years had not succeeded in securing for the Eternal City order and peace. It was in the year of the third Otto's death that Brian Boruma became King of Ireland.

The Battle of Clontarf was hardly over when the habit of pilgrimage from Ireland to Rome can again be illustrated. This is not to suggest that there were no pilgrimages in the tenth century despite the difficulties of the times ; it means only that evidence for such pilgrimages is not forthcoming. Now the list is impressive. In 1027 we have the King of Tír Conaill, Maelrunaid O Maeldoraid ; in 1028 the King of Brega, Flannagán O Ceallaigh, and the ruler of Dublin, Sigtrygg, said to be the founder of Christ Church, the city's first cathedral. Next in 1030 comes Flaithbertach O Néill, King of Ailech, and Olaf, son of Sigtrygg, who was murdered on his way across England. Cork is represented in 1042 by the grandson of Domnall, son of Dubdaboirenn, probably that Donnchad who gave his name to the O Donoghues, first of Cork and then of Kerry. The King and Queen of Gailenga in Meath were in Rome in 1051, and Donnchad son of Brian Boruma, who had just relinquished the throne of Munster, was there with his Queen in 1064. He is buried in Santo Stefano Rotondo. Two years later in 1066 the Normans conquered England. The ensuing confusion in that country and the general uncertainty militated against pilgrimage from Ireland to Rome for a generation, since the journey was normally made overland and the route

was by England rather than by ship to France. The reason presumably is that the pilgrim found it convenient to follow the ordinary trade routes. Ships to England might, so to speak, be found any day ; ships to France were fewer, so to wait for them might appear to be a waste of time. There is also the consideration that the sea routes Ireland–England, England–France, were short and the average Irishman was no great lover of the sea. His wish would be to cut that part of the journey to the minimum.

The Church in Ireland at this time, no less than the Church in all other countries, needed reform. During the tumult caused by the Viking invasions various abuses had crept in. There was also the problem, felt from the sixth century onwards, of the Irish Church's predominantly monastic organization. The Northmen had helped to resolve this problem by reducing most of the monasteries to ruin. Thus the opportunity had come for the clergy and people to set their house in order. Pope St Gregory VII himself, in 1076, gave first impetus to the work of reform in a letter to Toirdelbach O Brien, then the chief king in Ireland, *Rí Éireann co ffresabra.* It was a letter couched in general terms ; but Gregory was famous throughout the world as champion of the Church's rights against the powerful Emperor, Henry IV, and his letter to Toirdelbach O Brien needed no interpretation. The welfare of the Church in Ireland meant by implication the introduction of far-reaching reforms. This was understood by Toirdelbach and perhaps still better by his son and successor, Muirchertach O Brien.

It is significant that the first bishop prominent in the work of reform was Domnall Ó hÉnda of Killaloe. He died in 1098. His place was taken by Maelmuire Ó Dúnáin of Meath, who died at Clonard in 1117.

By this time remarkable changes had taken place. In 1101 Cashel, the traditional seat of the Munster kings, and also the place beyond all others in the south intimately connected with St Patrick, was given by Muirchertach O Brien to the Church. It was a princely gift, destined to have lasting consequences. Keating, in his *Forus Feasa ar Éirinn* says that Maelmuire O Dúnáin was present at the Convention of Cashel in 1101 as Papal Legate. Certain it is that this office was held by Gilla espuig or Gilbert, the bishop of Limerick in the early years of the century. In that capacity, as *Legatus natus,* the permanent representative of the Pope in Ireland, he attended the Synod of Rathbresail in 1111. As Papal Legate he was the chief person present, superior to Cellach, the archbishop of Armagh. Rathbresail, as is well known, made Cashel into an archbishopric and divided the country ecclesiastically into dioceses on the Continental model. This, of course, was a revolutionary step. The small dioceses established by St Patrick had been elbowed out of existence by the great monasteries. Abbots for centuries had exercised jurisdiction over the faithful near their churches and in the lands over which they

held sway. Bishops had been numerous, had been respected and treated like kings, had performed all the functions reserved to their office, but had not possessed dioceses or sees. This was now remedied, so completely that the diocesan organization of the country has changed but little through the centuries since.

The magnificent achievement of Rathbresail was completed within a generation. Much credit for this goes to St Malachy of Armagh. He freed the primatial see from the grip of the local lords who had treated its possessions as their private property. He consolidated the dioceses by emphasizing the metropolitan rights and duties of Armagh and Cashel. To secure the pallium for the archbishops of these sees he journeyed twice to Rome, first in 1140 and again in 1148. The story of his meeting with St Bernard of Clairvaux and of the friendship which immediately sprang up between the two saints is one of the most attractive chapters in Irish ecclesiastical history. St Malachy was so impressed by St Bernard that he introduced the Cistercians into Ireland. Their success there was extraordinary. To the people they were most acceptable as worthy successors of the old Irish monks. St. Malachy also introduced the Canons Regular of St Augustine, with the happiest results.

In May 1140, St Malachy saw Rome for the first time. Pope Innocent II received him with honour. ' He spent a whole month in the city', St Bernard says, ' visiting the holy places and resorting to them for prayer'. During that time he had frequent audiences with the Holy Father. ' And when he was already preparing to return home the Pope committed to him his own authority, appointing him legate throughout the whole of Ireland'. St Bernard describes the final audience : ' Then (the Pope) took the mitre from his own head and placed it on Malachy's head and took the stole and maniple which he was accustomed to use at Mass and saluting him with the kiss of peace he dismissed him, strengthened with the Apostolic Blessing and authority'. On the second occasion when St Malachy was on his way to Rome he got no further than Clairvaux where he died in the arms of St Bernard.

Four years were to pass before the pallia sought by St Malachy reached Ireland and then their number was to be four, not two, for Dublin and Tuam were to be raised to the rank of metropolitan sees. On this occasion the Holy Father was represented in a special manner by John Paparo, Cardinal Priest of the title of San Lorenzo in Damaso. He presided at the Synod of Kells in the third week of Lent, 1152, and on his return to Rome could tell the Holy Father, Eugene III, that the work of reform in Ireland was ended. No difficulty remained which the reorganized church in Ireland could not satisfactorily face.

And so, through the centuries, veneration for the Apostolic See and for its ruler, the successor of St Peter, remained strong among the clergy and the people of Ireland. When we think of the long line of Popes,

Pope St Celestine I, Pope St Leo the Great, Pope St Gregory the Great, Pope John IV, Pope Innocent II, Pope Eugene III, we think too of the long line of Irish pilgrims whose delight it was to do them honour. That line of pilgrims was sometimes thick and sometimes thin, as conditions at home and abroad varied, but it was never broken. Nor did the sentiments of the pilgrims alter. The notion, once a commonplace of polemical literature, that Ireland accepted the supremacy of the Holy See for the first time as a result of the reform movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is more than a misconception ; it is an historical error. Compare St Malachy in his dealings with Pope Innocent II in 1140 and St Columban in his dealings with Pope Gregory the Great in 600 and with Pope Boniface IV soon afterwards and the similarity of outlook is striking. St Malachy, present in body, showed his reverence for the Holy Father by word and deed ; St Columban, absent in body, showed his reverence for the Holy Father by letter. St Malachy, as far as we know, never expressed his affection for the Holy Father in terms even faintly comparable with those used by St Columban. In a word the Church in Ireland recognized the supremacy of the Apostolic See and showed respect and veneration for him who occupied it, and many of the Irish clergy and faithful manifested that respect and veneration by journeying to Rome to the tombs of the Apostles through all the centuries from the fifth to the twelfth. Much has been said of the loyalty of Ireland to the Apostolic See since the Reformation. That loyalty is not something new, something called into being by a great upheaval and by opposition to novelty in doctrine and to political tyranny. It is nothing more than a continuation of the attitude of respect, veneration, loyalty, love shown towards the Pope and the Apostolic See from the days of St Patrick and the monastic founders to the days of St Malachy and St Laurence O Toole.

Modern Painting in Ireland

ELIZABETH RIVERS

IN the early years of this century one might say that academicians were satisfied with their age old categories of work and, quite without self-consciousness or irony, assumed that they held the only professional status among artists. They based this assumption on a sort of trades union of the establishment which did not allow that any professional might earn his livelihood by other means than those of painting or teaching painting. A need that might cause artists to take temporary jobs to support themselves would, in their view, place them among the amateurs. For an academician a gentle tour of landscape painting abroad or in the country, a series of still-life studies in the studio, these were his recreation in a life mainly devoted to portrait work. Perhaps, now and then, a major commission might come his way for a large commemorative picture for a public place.

All this was fine a hundred years ago when artists were well installed and highly paid but it had begun to be remote from life in the last century. In teaching and in the practice of painting they ignored the pictorial organization of space and isolated their subjects in the conventional light of the studio ; the edge of their skill and of their knowledge had become blunted.

In Byzantine art as in Mediaeval and in Romanesque and, indeed, in all great art, the composition of a picture is subtle. It is based on relationship of all the parts. This is no less true in portrait painting than it is true of wall-painting or, in smaller compass, of the wonderful composition of the illustrated page in early manuscript books. It is there in the work of the great masters of the Renaissance who had tremendous skill in the combination of a new realism with magnificent scale of design.

The deterioration which we know in the art of the academies came much later and we can easily forget that their prosperous reign in the world of art only began in England in 1780 and later than that in Ireland. It had its peak in the last century and perhaps it was partly because its rewards were so great that it declined until, gradually, the academic ranks almost ceased to include artists capable of notable work.

It was not so much a revolt as it was a change of heart that brought about the new era in art. Two Irish artists brought modern work to this country after they had made extensive studies abroad. Mainie Jellett (1897–1944) and Evie Hone (1895–1955) had worked for many years in

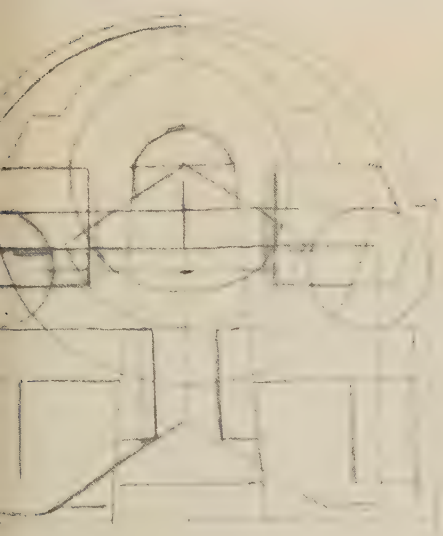
France. Mainie Jellett had begun her studies in Dublin and worked under Orpen in the School of Art. She went to London with a scholarship where she met Evie Hone who was already working there. They left London to go to Paris together, drawn irresistibly towards the modern movement in painting. In Paris they entered into a studentship with Albert Gleizes, acting as his assistants and collaborating with him in his experiments on the theory and practice of abstract painting. Thus they were in the forefront of the movement which followed Cubism.

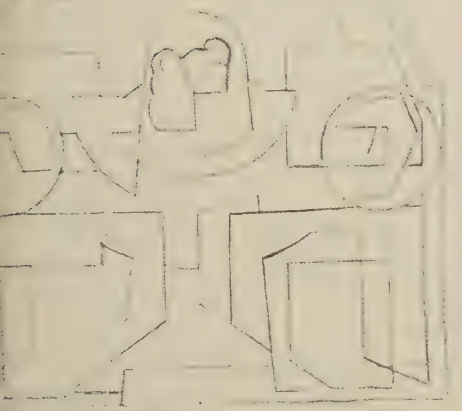
They brought their researches back to Dublin and, in 1924, held an exhibition here. It was derisively received. Eileen MacCarvill in her book on Mainie Jellett writes, ' Like the Cubist painters of the Salon d'Autumne of 1910 and the Salon des Independents of 1911 Mainie Jellett had to bear the obloquy of a hostile criticism which soon degenerated into derision.'

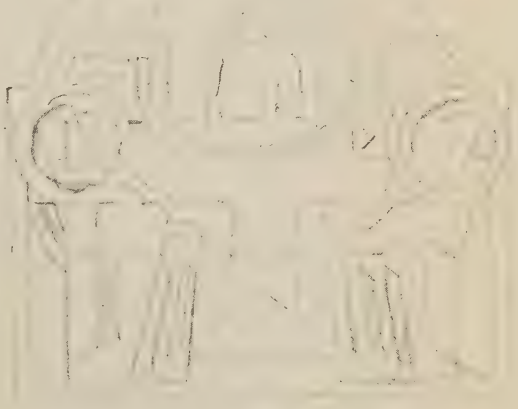
The Modern Movement in the arts is a challenge that has sounded in Europe for very nearly a century and with an increasing insistence. It has so considerable an achievement to its credit that its reality is no longer a matter for discussion but, as a phenomenon to be deplored or as a significant renewal of life in the arts, it is endlessly debated.

To those who have studied the history of art through the ages it is apparent that there are aspects of modern art that are akin to art as it was in Europe before the Renaissance projected a different view. In the Renaissance the ideas of Greek Classical art predominated ; this generated an emphasis on the rendering of appearance and on an ideal beauty of form. This idealization and cold perfection was intended to arouse admiration. Whereas before that time the Church had employed artists to create a pictorial language understood by the people, during the Renaissance with the new sense of man's importance the arts became increasingly rhetorical. They worshipped greatness and had a passion for glory ; painters created effects of reality that were in keeping with a love of comfort and of splendour. Renaissance paintings have a character of command rather than one of appeal ; they speak with a proud and lively voice recognizable even now.

Modern art has reversed the direction that was taken at that time and has turned away from the effects of reality that were the main preoccupation of the Renaissance and, after that time, of the academies. Step by step the succeeding generations in our own time have experimented with the fundamentals of picture making, re-discovering the contributory elements which they realized had become obscure. Perhaps their influences were often drawn from primitive sources because the new movement was itself at the beginning of a new era. The Renaissance drew its life from the newly released classical repertory ; it was not self-generated but was a deeply influenced art. It remade art in classical-







(By courtesy of Mrs. Eileen MacCarvill)

(By courtesy of Colonel Robert Knox)

2. Evie Hone : *Abstract*

(By courtesy of the artist)

3. Patrick Pye : *Deposition*

(By courtesy of Waddington Gallery)

4. Jack Yeats : *In the train*

(By courtesy of the artist)

5. Patrick Collins : *Children playing in the street*

humanist form because the fourteenth century was itself at that level of civilization and was ready to receive it. What the nineteenth century regarded as clumsiness in the art that preceded the Renaissance was, in fact, a different vision altogether and had a different end in view.

Art, by definition, is the making well of what needs to be made. This rules out the copying of externals and sets the far more demanding and rewarding task of organization and selection towards a definite goal. Every art, in its making, discloses a way of looking at the world and one might contrast the humanism dominant in differing degrees in all European art since the Renaissance with the less clearly defined but apparently abstract character of art in its present manifestation.

In this context one may consider Art in Ireland. For a truly Irish art the historian must go back to pre-mediaeval or early mediaeval times : times when nations were in the making and when peoples had specific characteristics and when they practised native arts in precise localities.

Irish art had particular characteristics ; it was deeply imaginative, formal and abstract with, nevertheless, a lively sense of man, of bird and of beast as is shown by their use in sculpture and illuminated page. For a description of this art the reader should go to the book by Françoise Henry on this subject.[1]

After speaking of Irish art in the perspective of history she continues ;

> If this work stops at the end of the tenth century, it is because after that date the history of Irish art took a completely new turn. Up to that time it kept a fundamental, irreducible originality. Later it was confronted with Romanesque and Gothic art at a moment when its vitality was undermined by historical circumstances.

I would advise anyone interested in art in this country to spend a few meditative periods in the two public galleries in Dublin. After reading of the early centuries in Ireland, it will give a perspective to their view of the late past and of the present time.

It would be interesting to know if the earlier struggles to assimilate ' foreign models ' was attended with a like bitterness to that experienced in the present age by the conflict of modern with academic art. The galleries are predominantly academic in their collections and there is very little Irish painting that might not have come from any other West European country with an academic tradition. But, when Françoise Henry says ' the long struggle to assimilate . . . foreign models . .' she momentarily overlooks the fact that the whole European art within that

[1] *Irish Art,* Françoise Henry : London : Methuen.

period was itself overwhelmingly changed by a fusion of different arts and finally by the Renaissance. 'Foreign models' is a poor synonym for art which was the outcome of a new age. Ireland was one of the furthest outposts to feel the impact of a change that was affecting, or had already affected, all countries. Perhaps the truth that underlies all assessment of the arts in Ireland is simply that there was no real development possible under an alien power. The art which arose at later dates was never specifically Irish, but was very often the work of imported craftsmen.

Art is never patriotic though it may add to the stature of the country of its origin. '. . . An artist can only serve the glory of his country by being an artist or, in other words, on condition that when he is studying the laws of art, making his experiments, his discoveries as delicate as those of science, he thinks of nothing . . . not even his country . . . except the truth before him.' [1]

Yet, we habitually speak of Italian, or of French or of Spanish art and it would be true to say that there is a national character that shows itself through most widely accepted forms in art. There is a French School that includes painters of many nationalities but in it Picasso and Juan Gris remain Spanish, Modigliani remained Italian and Chagall remained Russian.

The conflict of ideas in art which arose on the continent towards the end of last century released a new spirit of experiment but this spirit never obscured the national character of workmanship to anything like the same extent as had the academicism which preceded it. Work coming from the Beaux Arts in Paris was much like that of the Royal Academy in London.

Even without opposition any fundamental change, such as has taken place in the arts in our time, would have been slow to establish itself and one aspect of any such revolution, in individual as in general character of thought, is that the preceding condition persists in fact long after it has ceased to operate with any real source of inspiration. One might say that the new achievement is wrapped in a sort of cocoon of woolly thinking inherited from the past from which it seeks to free itself. Contemporary life has taken a new hold on the arts here in Ireland but reverberations of opposition to the new trends still creates discussion and discord. Modern art is still struggling to free itself from the cocoon. If I take 1924 (the date when Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone introduced their studies) as a starting point, many years elapsed before there was any general appreciation of Modern Art. In 1943 we find these two artists (backed by a distinguished committee which at that time included three academicians) initiating the Exhibition of Living

[1] *The Creative Vision,* Marcel Proust

Art. This exhibition has been a yearly event since that time and has not only established the reputation of many painters in Ireland but has shown modern work from other countries to an increasingly interested public.

Both Evie Hone and Mainie Jellett were creative artists of a very high order ; both moved away from the strict discipline in which they had formed their skill to a more flexible use of the principles of colour and of composition. In Evie Hone's stained glass the deep personal note always apparent in her work is given tremendous strength and sonority by her masterly control of colour and of the structure in line. This knowledge was acquired in the years of patient labour in the studio of Albert Gleizes.

Mainie Jellett, besides being a fine painter, was a generous leader and teacher who used her influence to help artists from abroad who came to Ireland in the early years of the war. She was constantly reiterating that the place of the artist in society should be that of a useful member ; that their specialized knowledge should be employed by architects and by industry.

I speak of these two artists at some length in this short article because they laid the foundation for much that has developed since that time. They opened the doors in Ireland for the work of a new generation.

In any contemporary exhibition of the work of Irish painters there is an extraordinarily wide choice of character ; perhaps this is because many have studied abroad but have retained a sound core of personal experience in their attitude to the many conflicting currents of fashion that sweep through the bigger capital cities. A certain amount of art in any period is like journalism ; it is caught up in the selected jargon of the time. It appeals to its audience by its interpretation of a current fashion and has no intrinsic interest ; the principle of life is lacking and there is no real understanding. This work of a moment will fall away. To the serious and discerning there is a wide difference between work of this calibre and work of genuine merit.

The real point to keep in mind during the lengthening perspective of revolt and renewal is that the basic necessities in art remain constant. All art is mysterious to some people because, in fact, it depends on the development of special faculties in the artist. The spectator who has inherited the taste for the limited and imitative character in the painting practised in the last century is at a disadvantage. He is not used to considering an art brought into the service of ideas, an art caught up in the excitement of a new world. The art of this century is nothing less than that. The special faculties that an artist must develop are creative and interpretive. Whatever his direction of thought or of imagination whether figurative or abstract, in portrait as well as in ' Action ' painting,

he points the way to contemplation of a reality underlying appearance. If he does not do this, his work is of little value.

Thinking back for a moment to Irish Art of the early centuries one wonders if the visionary and abstract character with which it is imbued may, after all, find a new expression in this modern era. The whole character of the modern era tends towards works of imagination and planned design. The langourous art of Lavery, the empty virtuosity of Orpen which followed the patient and discerning skill of the elder Yeats is succeeded by the cogent and visionary painting of Jack Yeats, by the tenacity and devotion in research of principles of colour and design of Mainie Jellett and by the great achievement in stained glass of Evie Hone.

Jack Yeats was at first well known for his lively documentation of varying scenes, mostly in country towns or seaports of the west coast but, with a sure instinct and deeply personal vision which could have come out of no other country, he progressively moved away from his earlier manner. He used his paint freely to evoke scenes with a brilliant use of colour, splintered in light and massed in rich and contrasting shadow, scenes that carried a mood sometimes of melancholy, sometimes of an epic and visionary quality. The visionary quality often takes over by a simple but nevertheless magic act of association. In the painting of a man reading in the train there is no doubt about the substantial truth of observation but the acute awareness of the artist, his exuberant use of texture and colour, does not allow us to remain as mere spectators but involves us in the definition of a dream.

There are some paintings of Jack Yeats to be seen in the Modern Room at the National Gallery and a fine example is in the Municipal Gallery. Another Irish artist who made an international reputation was Paul Henry. The quality of his work is often overlooked by reason of the popular appeal of a few crude examples of mountain scenery in the west ; he was a good painter as some of his landscapes prove. Seán Keating, perhaps best known for some fine drawings, is represented by a small characteristic painting in the National Gallery ; his larger works, showing an intransigently personal expression in the tradition of Orpen, are in the Municipal. In this gallery you may find among the smaller pictures an exquisite little portrait by Margaret Clarke ; there is also work by Seán O'Sullivan who has pursued a consistent course in portrait painting and who rarely shows his more lively smaller landscape or genre studies. The younger, and even other more established, painters are noticeably absent in this public collection at the Municipal Gallery. Any visitor, either Irish or from abroad, would get little idea of the scope of modern work being done unless he had the opportunity of seeing current exhibitions. For many years the Waddington Gallery kept a lively selection of work on view ; the Dawson Gallery and the

Ritchie Hendricks Gallery are at present the two main centres in which the work of contemporary artists may be seen. In London the Tate Gallery has a good cross-section of modern art permanently on view and in Paris the Musée Moderne does the same ; in Ireland such a collection does not exist.

Of the few paintings in the modern collection of the Muncipal Gallery most have been donated by the Friends of the National Collections. The little room where they are hung has a desolate air.

Nano Reid is represented by a minor work. Her capacity for a diffuse yet controlled design is distinctive ; her workmanship and imagination have long been proved by a consistent production. The sources of her art lie in the Irish countryside and her performance shows a lyrical awareness on two levels; firstly, the ancient inheritance of architecture and secondly, in the lively presence of a pulsating common life. A characteristic painting of Mellifont Abbey presents the Abbey firmly placed, light against dark, while in the left of the picture appears a startled horse behind a gate that is oddly awry. There is no example of the work of Norah McGuinness, an artist who is well known here and abroad. Her paintings have a romantic quality expressed with a strong organization of colour. Her work, which has always retained a foundation in logic laid during her time of study in France, has gained immeasurably in its clarity in the past few years. The subject matter is drawn equally from the country with its grasses and roads, Georgian Dublin, or coast and harbour. Whatever the origin, and her sympathy is wide in its human context, she paints with a sure skill.

Louis LeBrocquy is represented by a small early work but there is no example of his mature, subjective and sensitive painting by which he has come to be well-known. The formal beauty in the painting of Louis LeBrocquy shows an exquisite quality ; the textures have a strength and delicacy that almost shock. With a pervasive use of white that is something less than light and within which there is an indication of subcutaneous warmth that is more potential than actual, he reveals rather than states the human presence. This intimation of presences scarcely revealed is individualized by the knots of vertebrae. There is no distortion in the ordinarily accepted meaning of the word but there is a fastidious quality, a selection of identity that, by elimination of all else, implies the solitariness of a vision.

George Campbell is shown here by one of his Spanish landscape paintings. It is a characteristic picture and a fair enough example of his work which has evolved from rather sombre evocations of people and of landscape into an equally well organized but more colourful use of paint which is often near abstract. Gerard Dillon is absent, though he had done some notable work in which clear colour coupled with a deceptively naïve vision have expressed a witty and compassionate

interpretation of the Irish life of the west. More recently he has turned to experiment in abstract forms and the character of his work has changed; it is all the more a pity that one of his paintings was not purchased long ago.

Another genuine and talented painter among those who have escaped public notice is Caroline Scally. She uses a limited range of colour with the most arresting arrangements of natural forms. Dairine Vanston is of an altogether different vintage. The pervasive mood of her painting is exotic and strange, with a potentiality perhaps not yet fully realized. Her work is influenced by continental art as, too, is that of Father Hanlon whose early work showed a genuine talent developed by his studies in France. The influence of the teaching of Andre Lhote has been formative in the work of many artists who studied in the middle, or earlier middle years of this century and it is interesting to find it present but with a different emphasis in the work of Barbara Warren. She has a gaunt and severely articulated style that, so far, only occasionally comes to life.

Camille Souter is an uncompromisingly abstract artist whose paintings are suffused with a subtle poetry. Her use of colour is as subtle and personal as the poetry of form. Anne Yeats shows a highly developed sense of drama and of comedy in her rather too few good paintings. This character in her work is never more than implied by a juxtaposition of the unexpected but it is sufficiently original to make one wish for a development.

Richard O'Neill achieves something of this unexpected quality too with a style reminiscent at times of Ben Shahn. Patrick Pye, one of the younger painters, has already attracted notice by religious works in which he shows a spiritual alignment with the Flemish mode, using an imagery that is often of domestic character and proportion while expressing a mental and emotional experience of lofty themes. His work in stained glass is serious and imaginative. Perhaps Patrick Scott has been the centre of more discussion than most of his contemporaries among the modern painters in Ireland. Though his work always presents recognizable aspects of reality, these are transmuted into another order of thought and in this imaginative plane they present a rather terrifying isolation. I have an uneasy intuition in confronting his work that he has not so far been able to find the proper measure of his ability, that it is a potential rather than an actual achievement. The negative brilliance of the series carried out with spray on hardboard show a fertile imagination of which the impact is lost in the sterile trick of handling. If he could give us a more tactile use of material and less fastidious restraint, the works would be founded on more rewarding ground.

Patrick Collins conjures up smoky visions which, nevertheless, give the character of particular localities. His is a romantic and lyrical approach expressed with delicacy in a limited range of colour.

There are signs here and there of individual and talented young artists turning to figurative painting even though the tide is still flowing strongly in favour of abstract or, at least, of non-figurative work. Foremost among these in Ireland is Patrick Hickey who has a range of colour that is original and convincing, with a grasp of natural forms which take up a new identity in his paintings. Leslie McWeeney concentrates her attention on figure drawing though it is too soon to say where her sad and romantic imagination will lead her.

Where one recognizes these signs, either here or abroad, one recognizes instinctively that the impulse to bring in human and natural forms differs fundamentally from the use of these forms in academic painting. Perhaps there is nothing that could so make the gulf apparent between the painting of the past and of the present than this : that the figure should be again a major element in painting and yet be used so differently.

Modern painters do not intend to project what they observe on to canvas. Primarily the idea that gives rise to a painting is distilled through a screen of the mind ; the objective vision is controlled and the underlying structure of design gives character to the whole work.

Only time can show of what artists are capable and in that time it is the opportunity that is offered to them that may be the deciding factor in their work. The ' good ' versus the ' not good ' in art is a matter of perennial argument and this is bound to be so because it involves matters of taste. If we make comparison between the multitude of works that have survived out of the past, we exercise our personal taste in elevating some above others. But some, like the saints, remain with us while others, skilled and notable though they may be, are only of antiquarian interest. Real art is a language of passionate conviction.

Two Poems

THOMAS KINSELLA

COVER HER FACE

She has died suddenly, aged twenty-nine years, in Dublin. Some of her family travel from the country to bring her body home. Having driven all morning through a storm

I

They dither softly at her bedroom door
In soaking overcoats, and words forsake
Even their comforters. The bass of prayer
Haunts the chilly landing while they take
Their places in a murmur of heartbreak.

Shabby with sudden tears, they know their part,
Mother and brother, resigning all that ends
At these drab walls. For here, with panicked heart,
A virgin broke the seal ; who understands
The sheet pulled white and Maura's locked blue hands ?

Later her frown will melt, when by degrees
They flinch from grief ; a girl they have never seen,
Sunk now in love and horror to her knees,
The black official giving discipline
To shapeless sorrow, these are more their kin,

By grace of breath, than that grave derelict
Whose blood and feature, like a sleepy host,
Agreed a while with theirs. Her body's tact
Swapped child for woman, woman for a ghost,
Until its buried sleep lay uppermost ;

And Maura, come to terms at last with pain,
Rests in her ruptured mind, her temples tight,
Patiently weightless as her time burns down.
Soon her few glories will be shut from sight :
Her slightness, the fine metal of her hair spread out,

Her cracked, sweet laugh. Such gossamers as hold
Friends, family—all fortuitous conjunction—
Sever with bitter whispers ; with untold
Peace shrivel to their anchors in extinction.
There, newly trembling, others grope for function.

II

Standing by the door, effaced in self,
I cannot deny her death, protest, nor grieve,
Dogged by a scrap of memory : some tossed shelf
Holds, a secret shared, that photograph,
Her arm tucked tiredly into mine ; her laugh,

As though she also knew a single day
Would serve to bleed us to a diagram,
Sighs and confides ; she waived validity
The night she drank the furnace of the Lamb,
Draining one image of its faint *I am.*

I watch her drift, in doubt whether dead or born
—Not with Ophelia's strewn virginity
But with a pale unmarriage—out of the worn
Bulk of day, under its sightless eye,
And close her dream in hunger. So we die.

Monday, without regret, darkens the pane
And sheds on the shaded living, the crystal soul,
A gloomy lustre of the pouring rain.
Nuns have prepared her for the holy soil
And round her bed the faded roses peel

That the fruit of justice may be sown in peace
To them that make peace, and bite its ashen bread,
Mother, brother, when our questions cease
Such peace may come, consenting to the good,
Chaste, biddable, out of all likelihood.

OLD HARRY

A moral tale of guilt and its retribution. The Ordeal—*Death states the theme. He indicates the region of sin, in which the human flesh and spirit are required to undergo the ordeal of existence.* The Twilight of Old Harry—*The example is presented: an aged man; his choice; his guilt; his victims; his half-awakening; his punishment.*

I *The Ordeal*

'Master Love,' my grim instructor assured me,
'Moved already in the criminal darkness
Before our dust was chosen or choice began,
Devising, for spirits that would not crumple
At a touch, a flesh of thirst and pain, a blood
Sped by onward self-torment and by desire.'
He raised his hooded sockets. 'Dissolution
He thrust with liquid arm, in an act of love,
Under time's streaming arches into the world.'

I turned toward that dark arcade and beheld
Body and spirit together, open-eyed,
Drink up their sour ordeal, heaped with curses.
The body rocked, enduring this bitterness
—A figure fathoming its own misery—
Straightened and resumed its accurate pursuit.
'*What of the innocent spirit,*' I inquired,
'*In accurate pursuit of the ideal?*'
'The flesh proceeds to its harmonious end.'
'*What of the guilty?*' 'The spirit that invites
The criminal darkness to the human womb
Repays with the living flesh, and thigh shall rot.'

II *The Twilight of Old Harry*

1

Pink eyelids dipped in terror; softly, possessed,
Voles flew like shuttles through the brush. A buzzard
Completed its loop of threat above the trees.

Stroking with dangled key-chain nettle and fern
He marched with feeble vigour, shaggy, gasping,
A crumpled lion, through the woods' green oven.

Down dappled levels of oak, alleys of beech,
Light-beams burst, noiseless, on his loose hide of tweed.
His glasses flared suddenly, two sightless coins.

Warmth of rot and loam, round a turn of the path,
The scent of frail bells glistening with fat bees,
Held a clearing—silted in moss—in amber.

He pocketed his soft gold chain and halted.
A jay's hysterical laugh spurted and stopped.
He laid on a rich red tree his mottled hand.

2

Who time and time again slapped it down sharply
To put a stop, when he had cause, to anger,
The dangers of narrow thought, or mere habit,

How many golden years ago ! Assembled
About his gleaming table like steel children
All the war organisms of a continent !

Senior and neat, they advised and were absorbed
As with bluff final words he imposed reason
—A curb to the rash, a pupil to the wise.

And O those fearful days when the world spun round
To gusts of pain, and he waved his leaders out
And trod paths of fury down the panelled room.

To and fro, suffering from the drain of deaths,
Between bristling wall-maps where the earth travailed
And a high window recess with its smooth globe,

He raved softly and struggled for righteousness,
Then chose in loneliness near the blurred curtain
The greater terror for the lesser number.

Jaw jutting with power for good, he inclined
Rounded cheeks, eyes like coins, to the toy Arctic
And Boreas blew his dreadful moral blast.

3

Then the notorious cities of the plain,
Groves of the temporal, lost their flesh and blood,
Tiles, leaves, wild cries, stripped away by gales of light.

Lascivious streets before they shrivelled up
Heightened their rouge and welcomed baths of pure flame ;
In broad daylight delicate creatures of love

Swayed in a rose illumination of thighs,
Their breasts melted shyly and bared the white bone ;
At that sight men blushed fiercely and became shades.

The air in a passion inhaled, and all dissolved
Or collapsed shimmering on black recesses,
A silken scenery of Heaven and Hell ;

Exhaled, and the tympanum of earth shuddered,
Day cracked like a lantern and its blazing oils
Soared up in turmoil in thick vessels of dust ;

Anthropophagi moaned in the buckling cloud,
Amazons and chimaerae, leaving the world.
Where once the cities of wickedness had stood

An eye socket with nerves and ducts smouldering,
A mouth with torn uvula and no tongue,
Moistened like two wells the plain's enamelled face.

4

Odours of darkness prevail in the half light,
Tunnel sounds of the shallow earth encompass
A nest of twittering, naked animals.

Eyes clenched, grinning together in blind terror,
They tremble snout to snout, appearing to kiss ;
A paw strokes a soft flank as though to comfort

. . . Slight, razor-sharp, flesh-severing embraces.
At each light touch a little blood enriches
The threads linking heart to heart and lip to lip.

A scrap of winter silence came fluttering
Down like an icy feather among the trees
To touch his wrist with its invisible lace.

He shivered in golden light. The scabby trunk
Broke the polished surface of his dream. He scratched
In vacant memory of mucous pleasure.

Over the drowsy meadow his favourite
Martial music struggled with the tea-time breeze ;
Then, whistling a soundless note, he turned for home.

Vale

Soon, with God's goodness, the nettle turns to dust,
Bees seek their clustered sleep, the loam packs tighter
And cracked boughs deliver up their final bronze.

Do not let this allay your soft suspicion,
Rightly terrified sentinels of the woods.
In certain cases death is a criticism.

Christian Parties in Western Europe

JOHN MURRAY

Retrospect and Prospect

DURING the past fifteen years Christian political parties have played the leading role in Western Europe. They have been the major architects in Western European recovery as also in the valuable efforts made to bring its countries into closer association with a view towards a more integrated political framework in the future. Of their present importance and value there can be not the slightest doubt. No other party or group of parties, whether Liberal or Socialist, could have achieved so much or possibly even done the job at all. Yet an onlooker in Ireland or Britain may be forgiven if he asks the question whether this importance may not be out of proportion to their previous history and achievement or even to their real significance. Have they been, in the main, a special post-war response to post-war circumstances ? Or are they the legitimate culmination of a long and healthy political process ?

Certainly, present-day facts speak for themselves.

Since 1945, Italy has been administered by the *democristiani* with the occasional assistance of three smaller groups, and administered with remarkable stability when one recalls the destruction and disruption of the war years. *Democrazia cristiana* is the only Italian party capable of assuring regular democratic government.

In Western Germany the C.D.U. has been responsible for Germany's amazing revival and it has gradually educated Germans to democratic procedure. Only a government that functioned effectively and produced prosperous conditions could have done this. The C.D.U. Parliamentary representation has been twice increased, in both the 1953 and 1957 elections, and it may be further augmented this year. Neither the Liberal F.D.P. or the Socialist S.P.D. could have integrated Western Germany into the system of free countries as the C.D.U. has done.

The Austrian *Volkspartei* maintains a slight numerical advantage over its Socialist rival but both parties have been associated in a coalition government since 1945. In Switzerland, where for so long the political atmosphere was very unsympathetic to Catholics, there exists a Conservative People's party which holds 25 per cent. of the parliamentary seats and is, in the main, a Catholic and centre party.

In Belgium and Holland the situation has been stabilized for a much longer period. In Belgium, the Catholic party is the largest political

organization, and it generally forms part of the government, as till earlier this year in conjunction with the Liberals, or as at the present moment with the Socialists. In Holland, the Catholic People's party has close contacts with two Protestant groups, the Anti-revolutionary party and the Christian Historical Union. Between them, they have a permanent majority although they do not continually make use of it.

Finally, in France M.R.P. has exercised an influence out of all proportion to its actual membership. It polls between 13 and 14 per cent. of the total vote but it has enjoyed a key central position and been represented in nearly all French governments since the war.

As I have noted, there is no doubt at all about the present importance and effectiveness of this movement in Western Europe. It has been calculated that these parties hold from 37 to 38 per cent. of all seats in lower houses of Parliament and that, if we exclude Communists and certain extremist Right wing sections, they have an absolute majority of all democratic votes.

A Later Development

Yet the question may keep recurring: to what extent is this a temporary phenomenon? Is it largely the outcome of the war? What are the chances that it will continue as the dominant political tendency on the Continent? Are there signs already evident that it is losing grip or disintegrating? After all, its emergence in some countries has been very sudden. Prior to 1914 Italy was controlled by Liberals, and subsequently by Socialists and Fascists. But to-day no government could function in Italy without the *democristiani*. Is Christian democracy a phase through which Western Europe is now passing as it has passed through the phases of Liberalism and Socialism?

This article is a modest attempt to say something of the roots and development of Christian democracy in its Continental form and to suggest reasons why it is likely to dominate Western European political life for a long time.

Christian democracy has developed slowly—less rapidly than the doctrines of Liberalism and Socialism. To begin with, the Christian attitude is primarily a religious one. It is concerned with God and man's salvation. It is not at once caught up in social and political solutions. It is neither monarchical nor republican but can adapt itself to either system. It can accept a wider or a closer measure of state control. There are limits beyond which the Christian will refuse to go, and rights which he insists must be respected but normally he does not argue that this has to be done only in this way and not in that, provided that the limits are not transgressed or the rights ignored.

There is therefore no hard-and-fast Christian answer to political problems. The Christian is no *doctrinaire* thinker. Liberalism and Socialism, on the other hand, are simple and straightforward theories. The former takes its stand on the individual, his rights and opportunities. Its ideal is a minimum of State interference and control, and a maximum of initiative and liberty. Its general temper is—or was—optimistic with a rather glib belief that private initiative, if left to itself, would work for the common good. And so the community has to fend for itself on the ground that private enterprise is the best guarantee of the common weal. Socialism takes the opposite viewpoint, namely that the welfare of the majority can be secured only through a rigid control of the more wealthy and resourceful minority and that the emphasis has to be placed upon community, not individual, on State control and direction, not individual effort. Each of these doctrines has its measure of truth. The general standard of living was greatly benefited by Liberal enterprise but it brought with it great inequalities and much social injustice. A degree of State supervision is necessary in an imperfect world, and this principle has now been accepted in all democratic societies.

My point is that it was easy to put forward these two theories. Both are simple and both are one-sided ; both simplify the problem and—what is worse—oversimplify the human problem. They regard man as an economic and perhaps also as a civic and cultural animal. Liberalism prescinds from man's spiritual nature while Socialism denies it. Liberalism stresses individualism as opposed to authority ; Socialism, authority as distinct from individualism. The real political problem is far more subtle. It consists in finding a balance between authority and liberty, in introducing sufficient control to ensure respect for authority and to safeguard the welfare of the community and yet allow proper scope for personal action and personal freedom. Christian democracy has elaborated this *via media*, has created this delicate balance. It is not *conservative*, as Christians have tended to be conservative in the past ; it is not *Liberal*, in the classical sense, because its social doctrines are those of the great encyclicals of Leo XIII and his successors ; nor is it *Socialist* since it looks upon the individual as a human *person* for whom in the final resort the State has its existence and significance and not as a mere element within society and State.

Christian democracy came gradually into being on the heels of Liberalism and Socialism. In a full and valuable study on this subject, Professor Fogarty has traced the emergence of this movement[1]. He too observes that Christians have a natural slant towards conservatism ; after all, they have a great deal that calls for conservation, and they are not easy victims of the latest political panacea. But this cast of

[1] *Christian Democracy in Western Europe:* 1820–1953. Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd. : London. 1957.

thought may bring with it an aversion from change of any kind—a trait that is by no means so admirable. French Catholics in the late nineteenth century remained, on the whole, obstinately monarchist and refused to come to terms with the new Republic, thus handing it over in effect to Liberal and Masonic elements. In Italy the situation was further complicated by the problem of the Temporal Power. This meant that Catholics abstained from political activity, again leaving the field to non-Catholic and anti-Catholic forces. Pius IX, to begin with, had strong sympathies with the new Liberal ideas as he had with the movement for national unity. But his experience of the Liberals and the circumstances under which the country was actually unified turned him inevitably against them.

Yet, in Professor Fogarty's opinion, two actions of Pius IX which at first seeming were ultra-conservative and could be regarded as a defiance of Liberalism paved the way for Christian democracy. Modern Catholics, he states, look back to the Pope's stand in favour of Papal independence not as a violation of the liberal principles of Christian democracy but as the best contribution possible to them in the circumstances. This stand must be taken in conjunction with the Papal definition of the Immaculate Conception.

> The dogma itself was of purely religious significance. But the method of its proclamation was a ringing affirmation—the decisive affirmation, as time was to show—of the doctrine that the Pope is infallible when speaking *ex cathedra* in matters of faith and morals. The 'vertical' pluralism of modern Christian democracy requires Catholics (among others) to make their own way in the political, economic and social field as merely one 'spiritual' family among many. But it is only those who feel confident and secure in themselves who can, so to speak, enter wholeheartedly into a game of that sort and abide by its rules. A major source of this self-confidence and security for Catholic Christian democrats has been the consciousness of guidance and backing from a Church which maintains its authority and independence beyond challenge; and in Pius IX's double stand, on the Temporal Power and Infallibility, is the classic reaffirmation of this authority and independence in the conditions of the modern world. It can thus be said in a very real sense that Pius IX's refusal to accept democracy as applied to himself opened the way for other Catholics to enter confidently into the democratic world.[1]

With the shifting pattern of Western society in the nineteenth century many Catholics came to realize that they must adapt themselves to new ideas and techniques of living. The conditions of life were rapidly altering. Older patterns were being loosened. Status was giving way

[1] op. cit. p. 154.

to opportunity. They understood that, while they could not accept Liberalism *in toto,* there were many liberal notions, such as a wider franchise, free enterprise, the guarantee of human rights, and toleration, that could be fitted perfectly well into a Christian setting. The difficulty was to separate the new techniques from their philosophy and later Socialist techniques from the ideology which lay behind them. If this distinction be borne in mind, there were already by 1880 large sections in which men were thinking as Christian Liberals. The encyclicals of Leo XIII did much to ease this development. *Libertas Praestantissimum* (1888) approved liberal concepts like those of democracy and tolerance ; *Rerum Novarum* (1891) recognized the Socialist principles of class organization and State intervention ; while *Au Milieu des Sollicitudes* (1892) warned Catholic traditionalists that the time had come to turn their backs upon the past and to work with the new democratic regimes.

Earlier Essays in Christian Democracy

Christian democracy grew to self-consciousness sooner in Germany and in Holland and Belgium than in Italy or France. Belgian Catholics found in Liberals their best allies for securing the independence of the Church from the State and they set themselves solidly on the ground of liberal democracy. The Liberals, on their side, recognized the Church's right to conduct her own affairs and to maintain her own schools. In Holland, Liberals discovered that the Catholics who were seeking emancipation were their most suitable partners in their efforts for political reform. The Catholics took their stand on the basis of freedom and democracy. By 1848 Liberals and Catholics had won considerable advances. State control of both the Catholic Church and Protestant churches was relaxed, and their freedom to open and maintain schools was guaranteed. Subsequently, when the Protestants entered this political stream, Catholics and Protestants combined were assured of a permanent Parliamentary majority.

A similar though less stable alliance came into existence in the Germany of Bismarck when the Berlin government attacked first Liberals and then Catholics. On the Catholic side the *Kulturkampf* resulted in the formation of the *Zentrum,* the original purpose of which may have been defensive but which very soon adopted a positive policy and till its suppression by the Nazis played a most important and stabilizing role in German politics. This positive policy was social rather than political and it gave expression to the growing sense of social responsibility felt especially in the Catholic Ruhr and Rhineland. The protagonist in this social movement was Bishop Ketteler and the series of sermons which he preached in Mainz cathedral towards the close of 1848 was almost a blueprint for the future social movement. He was careful to

distinguish the Catholic from the Liberal and Socialist position. He condemned the Liberal failure to accept social responsibility and their 'atomized' conception of society, and stressed the obligations that belonged to property and money and the danger of looking upon human beings as 'hands' and not 'persons'. He rejected absolutism in every form, whether it was that of an appeal to the people as a tribunal of judgment regardless of ethical standards or that of an exaggerated State control. He was steering in social matters the same *via media* we have already noted in the Christian approach to politics. He could welcome State intervention for the removal of abuses and the creation of decent conditions of living but at the same time he emphasized the need for self help and mutual help among workers and favoured the growth of co-operative associations. This was no *via media* of compromise with outlines blurred and principles confused but a *via media* which contains the complex answers which alone correspond to the complex problems involved in that very complex being, Man. It should be borne in mind that this social awareness is one of the keynotes of Christian democracy, and advance on the social plane has been just as significant as in politics.

The *Zentrum* differed in certain respects from the Christian democratic party of to-day. It was Catholic in its membership and, to a very large extent, Catholic in the support that it attracted. There was no active Protestant collaboration such as now exists in C.D.U. It was also *confessional*, that is it represented the Catholic Church and, in the beginning, was concerned with Church and confessional interests, such as the relation between the Church and the State, education and the like. The Christian party nowadays is not *confessional* in this sense. Yet the *Zentrum* did stand, as does generally the Christian democratic party, midway between Liberal and Conservative forces to one side and Socialists to other. It served as a focal point round which democratic elements could group themselves. Under the Empire it remained 'Left of centre' to counterbalance the massive forces of the Right ; under the Weimar Republic it stood normally 'Right of Centre' for the very same reason, to counterbalance the strength of Socialists and Communists.

Christian Democracy among Protestants

One marked feature of Christian democracy in action to-day is co-operation between Catholics and Protestants, especially in countries of mixed religion. This is found particularly in Holland and Germany. It may assume one of two forms. Either you have Catholic and Protestant parties distinct from one another, yet collaborating freely and possessing a large area of common agreement, as in Holland : or, as in post-war Germany, there exists one joint Christian party.

Dutch Protestants became articulate later than their Catholic fellow

Dutchmen, in part because their churches had close links with the State. The Anti-revolutionary party founded by Groen van Prinsterer was more fully elaborated by Dr Abraham Kuyper who was heading at the same time a campaign for church reform along stricter Calvinist lines. This led to a separation of the *Gereformeerde* churches from the *Hervormde* church, and it was the first named churches that were the more consicous socially and politically. About 1890 the *Christian Historical Union* grew out of the *Hervormde* church which was more liberal both in its theology and its approach to public questions. This Union bases much of its action, as Catholics of course do, upon the notion of the Natural Law, and to an extent that might appear incompatible with orthodox Calvinism. In Holland, then, the Catholic party collaborates with these two Protestant parties and, as has been said, the three together enjoy a Parliamentary majority. These Dutch Protestant parties have remained *denominational*, that is attached firmly to their churches.

In Germany too the Protestant development was later than the Catholic, it was held up by the passive Lutheran attitude to the State and political activity. In 1878 Adolf Stöcker started a Christian Social movement which made very slow headway. About the same time Protestant workers' unions were initiated. But Stöcker was far from being a democrat. His hope was to persuade the German Emperor to permit greater independence for the Church as against the State and he and his followers were firm nationalists and monarchists. By 1914 a small Protestant movement did function but was very slight in comparison with the Catholic *Zentrum*. The Protestants had a small fraction in the Reichstag from 1907 till 1933. But there were two currents of thinking among Protestants on this matter. Many, even when they accepted the responsibility of bringing Christian principles to bear on public life, considered that this could best be done by means of existing political parties and not through a special Christian organization. Others urged the formation of a Christian Social party and after 1918 they associated themselves with the German National party, heir to the pre-war Conservatives. But by 1929 they felt obliged to secede from the party and to create a Christian Social People's service which captured 14 seats in the 1930 elections and grew rapidly in influence, especially in the West and South where Protestantism had its closest contacts with Catholics. It is significant that it is these West and South German Protestants that have been prominent in the Christian Democratic Union since 1945. They are generally speaking more politically minded and more conscious socially than their brethren in the East and North.

It may be said that this Christian democratic movement had reached the following positions by that time.

It had fully accepted democracy with its principles and methods though clearly it accepted neither the Liberal nor the Socialist philosophy.

It had its own philosophy of human nature and human life. It regarded man as a spiritual as well as an economic being, with rights that society had not conferred upon him and which it could therefore not take away, and with responsibilities to God, to himself, to the community. He had a right to liberty, to protection, to opportunity. He was fundamentally a human person. Liberty had to be reconciled however with authority. Christian democracy rejected the absolute freedom claimed by the Liberals and the total subordination of the person to the State which Socialism advocated. It had a delicately adjusted balance of its own.

It had another balance, this time between the conservative and the progressive. It was neither, in the classic meaning of the words, yet it was both. It was progressive, in that its social doctrine was based upon Christian principles, and in many cases explicitly upon Catholic social teaching. In this respect, it might be termed ' Left wing '. On the other hand, it was ' conservative ' in retaining and encouraging personal enterprise, in favouring co-operative effort in preference to State control. It would be foolish to pretend that all Christian parties in Western Europe have exactly the same social tone and colour. In Holland and perhaps also in Belgium, they are somewhat more conservative ; M.R.P. in France is further to the ' Left ' ; *Democrazia cristiana* has a Right and a Left wing that are not always easy to comprehend within the same movement. The German C.D.U. is in some ways ' conservative ' but it has passed very progressive legislation in industrial matters, for instance the *Mitbestimmungsrecht* law which gives to employees in certain major industries an equal share of the administration with employers and management.

Further, these Christian parties are on the whole very broadly based, more so than any other political party. Communist and perhaps to a lesser degree Socialist parties draw most of their support from the working class : Liberal and Conservative parties have a large proportion of the middle classes. These Christian parties bestride the political world. They are no longer what early Christian groups may have been to begin with, societies of idealists and reformers in the cause of social justice and on behalf of workers ; they include very large numbers of workers.

This is made clear from the figures for the different Christian Trades Unions. In France and Italy the strongest Unions numerically are those of which Communists have secured control. But second to them numerically are the Christian unions, which have a majority among those who belong to democratic unions. In these countries the Socialist unions are only in the third place. In Holland and the Flemish part of Belgium the Christian unions are easily first and have probably a majority over all the others combined. In Germany and Austria they are second to the Socialist-controlled unions but this is largely due to the fact that in Germany for example Christian workers preferred to continue

within the one general Trades Union and only in 1955 did they re-establish the Christian unions that had existed prior to 1933. In addition, we may point to the many Management, Middle-class and Farmers associations linked with these Christian parties and—what is every bit as important—the youth organizations, like the Young Christian Workers. The now middle-aged generation that was trained in the Y.C.W. movement is exercising a very widespread influence in Belgium, France and Switzerland. If a sound test of democracy be the support that a party gains from all sections of the community, then these Christian parties are decidedly more *democratic* than any others.

There is in this connection another point to be considered. Socialism is now on the wane in Western Europe as it is under slightly different circumstances in Britain. To begin with, its thunder has been stolen by the Communists, who are themselves Socialists—Socialists that have carried their Socialist theories to their practical extremes. Socialism, in the pre-war meaning of the word, is seen on the Continent to be a watered-down and wishy-washy form of Communism. It does not possess the moral vigour to combat Communism. What moral force it now retains is largely drawn from democracy which is by no means to be equated with Socialism ; indeed, on many a point they are contradictory. It is never easy to reconcile the measure of appropriation and control demanded by the older Socialism with personal freedom.

European Socialists are well aware of this and their temper and tone have altered considerably since 1945. Austria provides a good example of this change. Between 1918 and 1938 Austrian Socialists were uncompromisingly Marxist. No co-operation was practicable between them and Christian Social party members. The impasse led to the experiment of a Corporate State. Since 1945, Social Democrats have co-operated so effectively with the *Volkspartei* that they have formed one coalition government, in fact for the past fifteen years. Each party has been compelled to make concessions to the other, and the Austrian economy is now socialized more radically than the *Volkspartei* would doubtless have desired. But these Socialists have lost most of their uncompromising character, and more votes are cast for them to-day by Catholics than would or even could have been the case twenty years before.

German Social Democrats, who were less extreme than their Austrian counterparts, have also grown more moderate. Dr Carlo Schmidt kept insisting during the election campaign of 1957 that nationalization belonged to an earlier and outdated form of Socialism and was now repudiated. With the rapidly increasing prosperity, the Social Democrats are becoming more and more a Liberal bourgeois party which, were it returned to power, would scarcely dare or even want to alter the prevailing economic policies. Prosperity does not encourage Socialism which has its roots in hard times and a sense of injustice. It was always an appeal

to the ' exploited '. But, the Germans have observed, can you convince a young worker that he is being ' exploited ' when he arrives at his place of work in a car or on a motorbicycle ? A recent Gallup poll shows that two out of three young workers in Western Germany had never heard of Karl Marx. Continental Socialism is faced with this dilemma : it must either accept a large measure of individual enterprise and tone down its more rigid theories or forfeit a large measure of its popular support. Men will tolerate regimentation in time of crisis or for the common good. They will not tolerate it merely as regimentation for regimentation's sake. And the horrors and the unpleasantness of Nazi regimentation have not yet worn off. As long as the Western European peoples remain prosperous and even more if, as is likely, their prosperity increases, Socialism, in the form we have inherited from the nineteenth century, is certain to decline. Some of its techniques—those of State intervention and maintenance, have become the property of all modern governments.

The Concept of Europe

One of the most encouraging signs in Western Europe since the war has been the growth of the notion of Europe and the practical measures taken to give expression to it in international relations. For this closer collaboration between these countries many factors were answerable. Some of them were short-term, such as the need for mutual assistance in economic recovery, and the necessity of some mutual defence against the East. But other factors of a long-term nature were operative. Among these are the recognition that the era of the National State had passed, that peoples as near to one another as the French and Germans had to live and act together and, finally, that they had a great deal more in common than they had realized. So arose the idea of Europe—an idea resurrected from the past—and an idea which Catholics had never entirely forgotten. It was relatively easy for Catholics, members of a universal Church which acknowledges no limits to its apostolate, to welcome a more ' universal ' political and national idea, that of a Europe, or for the time being, a Western Europe that was a great deal more than the sum of its parts. I am not suggesting that Catholics were the only apostles of this new movement. Certain Socialist leaders, for instance M. Paul Henri Spaak, gave it their wholehearted support. Yet, it was *de facto* the Christian democratic parties which developed this idea and brought about the present European structure of ' Little Europe '.

At this point a comparison between the Socialist and the C.D.U. attitude in Western Germany after 1948 is most instructive. It again reveals how out-of-date was the Social Democrats ' approach.

Schumacher, their leader, stressed nationalism. German nationalism had swept Socialism away before the war. He was determined that for the future the two forces should march together. He was thinking in terms of the nineteenth and early twentieth century—in terms that no more corresponded to the international situation than did the Socialist methods to the economic position of the post-war world. Dr. Adenauer understood, firstly, that the only way in which Germany could be steered into safety and sanity was through close co-operation with the Western Powers. Germany's future, in his eyes, lay in an integration with France, Italy and the West. He soft-pedalled rather than emphasized nationalist feeling and he worked consistently towards a new framework for Western Europe, in which the older nationalism would be transcended. His policy was right and has proved very successful. There was one moment in August, 1954, when it seemed about to founder, that of the refusal of the French *Chambre* to endorse the plan for a European Defence Force which the six countries of 'Little Europe' had been preparing for more than two years. Dr. Adenauer had hoped to exorcise the danger of a purely German military revival through the establishment of a fully European army. Germany's admission into N.A.T.O. did save a delicate situation but it was not the solution, the more completely European solution, that the German Chancellor had had in mind. His desire was to achieve on the military plane what the Schuman Plan had already achieved on the economic plane of coal and steel, namely to render all future conflict between Germany and France an impossibility.

The Common Market which began to function in 1960 was strongly supported by Christian democratic parties. It is, in the first place, an economic agreement, that will greatly advance the countries included within it. You have now in Western Europe close on 200 million people —the most cultured and civilized in the world, with a long tradition of skill and craftsmanship. They may lack some of the resources of the United States and some of its technical 'know how', but they constitute a very powerful economic area. To employ an expression that became suspect, they form a Third Force on the economic plane. Yet it should be remembered that the ultimate purpose of the Common Market is not economic but political. Experience of what will eventually be free commercial and industrial relations between six countries is intended as a preparation for a new political association of the six countries. The Treaty of Rome makes this evident. It was clear enough when the European Coal and Steel Community was set up in 1952. One of the first tasks it allotted to its *Assemblée Générale* was that of drawing up a political constitution for these six peoples. The constitution was, I think, actually outlined, but any further use of it at the time had to be delayed because of the French refusal to accept a common defence force for Western Europe.

At the moment the British government is making up its mind whether or not it will finally join the Common Market, and the Eire government has announced its intention of following Britain's example, if it does become a member. Some problems have to be settled but in the main the economic advantages would greatly out-weigh the necessary sacrifices. The main difficulty in the case of Britain is psychological. The English will find it much harder to think of the Common Market in anything but economic terms. It will be a very convenient, it may be an absolutely necessary step to take. But it has implications that will not be so easily understood, let alone accepted. It calls for some ' pooling ' of national sovereignty because it is expressly directed towards a much closer integration of its member States. And here is one final point in which Socialists are unsympathetic to the European idea. Their panacea is State control, and this supposes that the State is absolute. Yet in modern European thinking the State is no longer considered in this absolute way. It has to abandon part of its sovereignty, that is of its absolute character, in order to work more narrowly with its partners. To put it in blunt terminology, each country will have to accept the interference of other countries in concerns that till now it has regarded as its own affair.

Finally, before I pass on to make some suggestions as to future developments and future obstacles, it will be well to consider how this European movement has been affected by the attitude of General de Gaulle. Charles de Gaulle is a remarkable man, an outstanding man—history may perhaps find him the most outstanding European figure of his century. He is a very Christian man, a convinced and devout Catholic. But he is no Christian democrat and for the ordinary democratic procedure which brought such uncertainty and dishonesty to France he has probably little but contempt. Yet, in another sense, he is a democratic person who does *represent* his countrymen as few *representatives* have done. If the will of the people is the test—and democracies claim to be its expression—then General de Gaulle is democratically elected. Rarely, in any free electorate has so large a majority been given as has been accorded to his new constitution and to himself as President. What is more, he is supported by all the forces of the ' Left ' who are continually claiming to be more democratic than anyone else. Politically, General de Gaulle belongs to the ' Left ' rather that the ' Right '. But politics scarcely interest him. He is a man with a mission and a vision ; he is, to employ Péguy's distinction, a man whose *mystique* has not degenerated into *politique*, though in practical matters he has plenty of political skill and expertise. In his vision, France is the natural leader of Western Europe. He personally is not in favour of any lessening of national sovereignty but views European co-operation as the close association of independent Powers, all of them conscious of their common interests and ideals. He sees a *Europe des*

patries. But it is significant that the normally inflexible de Gaulle has been won over to the idea of the Common Market because of its obvious economic benefits, and in spite of some reluctance on the part of French industry. He is a good European even though his conception of this Europe may differ from that of the German Chancellor. It says much for both of these great men that they continue to work together, in spite of differences, for what is in the final resort a common purpose.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

I have suggested that Christian democracy, as it is seen in action to-day in Western Europe, has a considerable history. It has been long in developing and it is now a sturdy plant. Socialism, in my judgment, is on the decline, and if we rule out a sudden movement from the French ' Right ' over Algeria, the older Liberal and Conservative forces have not the importance that they once had. It is unlikely under reasonably stable conditions that they can secure control and in any case, the more closely these countries are bound to one another, the less chance remains that one of them will pursue a totally independent course.

Nevertheless, some obvious dangers have to be borne in mind. In the first place, the loss of keenness and energy, that can often accompany a lengthy experience of public office. Democracy, as we have known it in Britain and the U.S.A., demands a critical and active opposition party. One of the present-day defects in British political life is that the Labour party, deeply divided and uncertain about fundamental issues, does not really fulfil that function while the Liberals, though increasing their support, are still relatively weak. After the war, the Germans and Austrians had a major problem which they solved differently. Should political parties form a joint government and so concentrate upon national recovery free from dissension or should the leading party govern with the most important rival in the role of an intelligent and constructive opposition ? The Austrians followed the former alternative : the result was order and co-operation at the price of a certain lethargy and complacency. The two major parties, the *Volkspartei* and Social Democrats, remained in office and nothing could dislodge them, so long as the parties continued to operate together. This meant that public opinion, which normally expressed itself through either of these channels, could no longer exert much influence.

In Germany, Dr. Adenauer was in a similar situation. Should he invite the Social Democrats to share in the government ? It would have been for him a difficult personal decision, for he is a man of decided opinions, and his relations with Dr. Schumacher, an equally firm but far less balanced personality, were unsympathetic. And it is doubtful

whether a joint C.D.U.—Social Democratic government could have brought Western Germany so quickly and clearly into its present integration within the Western world. But Germany did retain its Parliamentary opposition. However, even there the danger of taking things for granted may be present. Since 1949 the C.D.U. has been in power and it is most improbable that the 1961 elections will alter this situation. One of the cleverest election posters I have seen was shown by the C.D.U. in the 1957 campaign. It was very simple ; just a photogenic portrait of Dr. Adenauer, and beneath it the two words, *Keine Experimente* (no experiments). It was an appeal to the record of the C.D.U. and to rising prosperity within Germany and better relations with other countries. It will have certainly as much appeal in 1961. Yet one-party rule over a long period has its real dangers.

There is a second possibility that calls for some reflection. I have pointed out that these Christian parties are *central* parties, that they represent a delicate and balanced position and have a broad basis of popular support. While they are not a temporary expedient—a transitional phenomenon corresponding to a transitional post-war situation—they are obviously affected by that situation. No doubt many a vote is cast for them than might not be given them in easier and less troubled times. For many, they are the only effective democratic party, the only solid bulwark against Communist aggression.

A glance at the support they enjoy may help us. In Holland about 90 per cent. of the Catholic population votes, it would seem, for the Catholic party. This is an extremely high proportion. In Italy also the proportion is high, though a number of Catholic votes go to the monarchist and other Right wing groups. Italian conditions are exceptional. The Communist threat is at its most formidable and the *democristiani* are more intimately associated with the Church and with Catholic Action than in other countries. However, the *democristiani* have a wider basis of support than had their predecessors, the *Partito Popolare*. In 1919 the *Partito Popolare* had 25 per cent. of the vote in Northern Italy, and 12½ in the South. By 1921, the proportion had grown to 35.9 in the *Veneto* and 32 in the *Trentino-Tyrol* ; it reached nearly 30 in the Marches. But its backing in Southern Italy was still poor. When free elections were resumed in 1946, the Christian Democrats swept the old *Partito Popolare* strongholds in Northern Italy. In 1946 the party had more than 25 per cent. of the total vote and in 1948 48½ per cent. But there was a notable shift towards the *democristiani* in the South, where its percentage in 1946 was almost equal to that in the North (35.0 and 35.5 respectively) ; in 1948 the percentage was slightly better in the South, where the figures were 49.6 (for the South) and 47.9. Regionally, therefore, the Christian Democrats in Italy are much more firmly established.

But this is by no means the whole story. A centre party must include many members whose sympathies lie towards Right or Left. This phenomenon is very marked in Italy. Many Conservatives support the party because it alone can provide orderly and stable government. Their support is for the *status quo*. On the other hand, the *Partito Popolare* had an advanced programme of social reform. It was, to employ the tiresome but useful terminology, 'Left', certainly not 'Right'. Signor de Gasperi, once a member of the *Partito Popolare*, held the party together with his insistence upon recreating a democratic system in Italy. His cabinet was never exclusively drawn from it, even when it enjoyed an absolute majority after 1948. It included representatives of three smaller central groups, Liberals, Republicans and the Socialists of Signor Saragat. Since de Gasperi's death the party has been conscious of a continuous interplay of forces that would normally pull in opposite directions: the one, personified by Signor Fanfani, towards a more radical social programme; the other, towards a steadier conservatism.

This inner tension has been further intensified by the problem of the choice of alliances. The *democristiani* do not have an overall majority. Are they to seek support from the 'Right', from the monarchists if not from the neo-Fascists? Or should they draw nearer to the Socialists, now that Signor Nenni has broken at last with the Communist party? The danger of a division within the party is not immediate. In fact, recent party congresses have brought the different elements closely together, but they do present more clearly than other Christian democrats the problems of a central party. What has been said could be true of Belgium, where the more conservative wing of the Catholic party has affinities with the Liberals whereas the Trades unions, at least on social and economic grounds, would have sympathies with Socialists. It could even apply, though less actually, to Western Germany where again the more conservative members of C.D.U. would have much in common with the Liberal F.D.P.

In Western Germany the proportion of practising Catholics that supports the C.D.U. is roughly two-thirds, 66 or 67 per cent. Of the remaining third, some 16 per cent. vote for the Social Democrats, but only 3 per cent. for the Liberals; a number used to support regional parties, conservative in character, such as the Bavarian party. Twice as many church-attending Protestants vote for the C.D.U. as for any other party, but the general proportion is lower among Protestants (40 per cent.) than among Catholics (67 per cent.). A large number of Protestants of course are still politically Liberal. Indeed it has been calculated that Protestants vote more solidly for C.D.U. in regions where there is a strong Catholic population, for example in the South and West. Where the Catholic percentage is less, then support for C.D.U. among Protestants tends to decline. But even in predominantly Protestants areas, where

the Catholic proportion is only 5 or 10 per cent. the C.D.U. still receives a substantial backing, for example in Schleswig Holstein where it secures 30 per cent. of the total vote.

In France M.R.P. claimed that it had the support of about 50 per cent. of regular practising Catholics but the claim is possibly too optimistic. The remainder tend to vote for Right-wing parties.

Conclusion

Christian democratic parties have played this very significant part in the recovery of Western Europe after the war ; they are still continuing to play it. It is a striking thought that the political heads of all these countries we have been considering are at the moment Catholics as is also the President of the U.S.A. This fact alone suggests that Catholic—and more generally Christian—influence is far stronger in public and political life than in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. This does not mean that the Church itself is actively engaged in politics. Christian democracy is distinct from Catholic Action, which is an integral part of the Church's active apostolate. It is an attempt on the part of Christian men and women to translate Christian ideas into practice and to find a social and political framework within which human and Christian values can be preserved, authority provided and maintained, and human rights and liberties safeguarded. It has, in a period of very real emergency, inspired and sustained the Western European peoples to rebuild their economies, regain their self-respect and establish new and far sounder and friendlier relations with their neighbours. It has already achieved great things. There are hopes—and signs—that it may realize even greater achievements in the future.

Book Reviews

PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION

PHILOSOPHY OF THE STATE AS EDUCATOR. By Thomas Dubay, S.M. Milwaukee : The Bruce Publishing Co. 1959. xii + 237 pp. $5.95.

JOHN DEWEY : HIS THOUGHT AND INFLUENCE. Edited by John Blewett, S.J. New York : Fordham University Press. 1960. $5.00. xiv + 242 pp.

WORK AND EDUCATION. By John Donohue, S.J. Chicago : Loyola University Press. 1959. x + 238 pp.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF EDUCATION. Edited by Edmund Fuller. New Haven : Yale University Press. 1960. xiii + 265 pp. $1.45.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN A SECULAR SOCIETY. By W. R. Niblett. London : Oxford University Press. 1960. 162 pp. 12s. 6d.

PERHAPS some pedagogues may regret that education was not made part of the Church's sacramental system. It would have been so much simpler if Christ our Lord had left us a sacrament of Education, a ritual working infallibly *ex opere operato,* whose end-product would not have to pay for the frailties of human teachers or man-made systems. But however much we may canonize the traditional rubrics of education, we can claim no supernatural authority for them. Their authority rests on their effectiveness to produce the type of twentieth-century Christian who is our educational ideal. Hence the never-ending scrutiny of methods and successes, of which the present five books are a sample. Two of them (Dubay and Donohue) are refurbished doctoral dissertations ; two (edited by Fullam and Blewett) are centenary symposia ; the last is a committee report, written in England ; though Protestant, it is more relevant to Irish problems than the four transatlantic books.

Dr Dubay's work has indeed a touching relevance for Ireland. He refers on several occasions to our government's respect for the principle of subsidiarity, and says of Article 42 of the Constitution : ' It might stand as a remarkably complete but concise statement of Catholic thought on the State's function in education.' Dr Dubay's book is simply a philosophical study of this function of the state. The philosophy of his book follows familiar paths : he establishes the concept of the natural law, analyses the nature and function of the state, and limits its function by the principle of subsidiarity : that the state should help individuals and lesser societies to do what they cannot do efficiently for themselves, and should not interfere with them

unless they are unable to carry out their tasks efficiently. Dr Dubay's application of this principle to all the aspects of public and private education is careful, realistic, and of course of the highest topicality.

By importuning all the foreign embassies within reach (and Washington D.C., where he wrote the book, has the world's greatest assembly of embassies), he has illustrated the book with accounts of practice all over the world. This feature lifts the book out of the run of text-books of social philosophy. One has grown so used to text-books which present a perennial philosophy innocent of any reference to the world around us, that it is refreshing to find such a wealth of contemporary illustrations. Dr Dubay admits that his information comes mainly from official sources, and may in some cases represent an ideal of education which never went beyond the statute-book. Moreover his documentation is uneven, and seems to be determined mainly by the accessibility of information ; in authority it ranges from the records of private telephone-calls to quotations from State Constitutions. It is a book to be consulted rather than read. As a reference book, presenting a clearly argued *rationale* of the extent and limits of the state's role in education, it will be of obvious value on the education shelf of your library.

The centenary of John Dewey's birth in 1959 was celebrated by American educators with a round of books and bookish tributes to a man only seven years in his grave. Fr Blewett, S.J., of Sophia University, Tokyo, arranged a tribute from the Catholic teaching body, who were the objects of Dewey's most emotional and consciously malicious attacks. The symposium deals with all the branches of Dewey's philosophy, with his idea of a progressive school, and with his influence on modern China. Dewey himself did not believe in arguing with dead adversaries. Concerning the problems traditional in Western philosophy he wrote : ' We do not solve them : we get over them. Old questions are solved by disappearing, evaporating, while new questions corresponding to the changed attitude of endeavour and preference take their place.' It would be tempting to turn this on Dewey himself, but the problems which he raised in education, while they are gradually evaporating (as Dr O'Raifeartaigh bore witness in *Studies* of Spring 1961), have unfortunately not disappeared. In many American training colleges, budding teachers are still confused with some of his ideas : that all truths, whether in morals or in science, are merely tentative ; that children should not expect many settled conclusions, but should be constantly enquiring, and sharing their experiences with the teacher.

Dewey lived not merely to see but to repudiate many of the progressive schools which his ideas had fathered. Sister Raby, S.S.J., who herself taught in a Deweyan ' Progressive ' school, suggests in this symposium that no truly progressive schools on the Deweyan model ever did exist or could exist, for human nature refuses to adjust to Dewey's blueprint. Progressive schools were marked by ' a curious, uncoordinated quality . . ., an air of going in several directions at once.' Their chief virtue was the emphasis on problem-solving : the children's time and attention was effectively directed to thinking, to careful gathering of evidence for the solution of problems. But such an emphasis is not, and need not be confined to schools where teachers and

pupils are constantly going into a huddle on what to do next. Sister Raby concludes : ' Today progressive education is not in fashion. It was an experiment. Its defects were intrinsic. Its virtues can be cultivated in any good school.'

If Dewey, as is clear from this book, suffered in his philosophizing from the narrowness of his education and his lack of contact with the perennial wisdom of the West, he made up for it partly by his extreme alertness to conditions of society in his contemporary America. In particular he was aware of the changes being wrought by urbanization and industrialization, and of the new problems created by the spread of education. A large part of his solution was to give manual work an important place in children's schooling, because in and through work something more precious and more fundamentally human finds expression : the desire to live in cooperative friendship with others. He was angrily opposed to the Aristotelian idea of education for leisure, which in the 1940's was championed by Robert Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago.

Fr John Donohue, S.J. of Fordham University has written a chapter on ' Dewey and the Problem of Technology ' in the Dewey symposium and has set the same thoughts in a different context in his book : *Work and Education.* In the first chapter he forestalls an objection :

> Everyone agrees, it may be said, that we need a spirituality of work, an understanding of work as the means of ethical maturation, and an instrument of personal development. Indeed, these are clichés by now. What we most require are concrete methods for achieving those highly generalized goals. The objection is not without force, yet it may be that some consideration of the *why* will light up the *how*. It is worthwhile, after all, to see whether there really are distinctive values in work which are worth pursuing, and how these are to be located in a wider synthesis.

It is true indeed that the scientists of the *how*, the industrial psychologists and engineers, have done much more than the philosophers to make industrial work human and happy (Fr Donohue quotes the American inventor Kettering : ' It's easy to build a philosophy. It doesn't have to run.') Nevertheless this philosopher has written a useful, if inflated, book on the *why* of work. He studies the theories of Marx, Dewey, and the neo-Aristotelians like Babbitt and Hutchins, then outlines a Christian philosophy of work in education : work is not simply a penalty of original sin, but a natural function of man, and for the Christian a redemptive and Christ-like activity, an obedience to God's command : Inhabit the earth and subject it.

Whatever sweet things we may say about Irish secondary education, we can hardly claim that it instils this Christian attitude to manual or machine work. The halo of ' status,' which bedevils every aspect of Irish education, has never been seen by schoolboy eyes over the farmer or the factory-worker. It is misplaced status that draws school graduates to white-collar jobs rather than farming, fishing or factory work. Many emigrants have turned down manual work at home only to take up much more gruelling tasks in England or America. How often you are told, when you congratulate an emigrant on the life he has made for himself in U.S.A. : ' But I worked for it, twice as hard as ever I worked, or was willing to work, in Ireland.'

Education in work and through work is Fr Donohue's remedial formula ; teachers may find it vague, and his language abstract. But behind it lies a wide acquaintance with the literature of his subject and serious thought on a problem that should exercise Irish educators.

When Kent School in Connecticut celebrated its centenary in 1955, it invited some ' distinguished Christian thinkers ' to meet there and discuss the Christian idea of education. The names of the symposiasts, including Niebuhr, Maritain, Alan Paton and Courtney Murray, entice you from the cover. They are the book's main attraction. The papers as here printed are too brief to be of consequence, and the discussions, though they were lively and surely profited the participants, hardly deserved the relative immortality of paperback publication as *The Christian Idea of Education.*

There are no distinguished names to draw the reader to the fifth book. It is a report, compiled from the testimonies of dozens of teachers, on how a teacher can give a Christian education in Britain's non-denominational schools. Irish educators, though they do not have this task to face, will still find this the most valuable of the five books under review. It is well-written, realistic, free from illusions and from jargon. The Christianity to be communicated is, of course, watered-down and undoctrinal, and the chapters on Religious Instruction proper, and on Worship in the school, have little relevance for us. But in a relatively open society (and ours is becoming daily more open) sheer instruction in religion, however accurate and attractive, is insufficient to form or modify children's attitudes. Attitudes are communicated rather than taught, and Professor Niblett shows how a Christian teacher's attitude will be seen in his approach to mathematics and science; to literature and the arts, to history, and to his pupils.

Not that there is a Christian mathematics or science. But those who are taught science by an intelligent Christian will not graduate with the idea that all reality is on principle measurable, or that the inductive method is the only strictly valid way of discovering truth. Yet these positivist assumptions lie behind so many text-books of science that it needs an alert and informed teacher to save his pupils from their naivety. The attitudes involved in teaching languages or history can clearly be even more crucial : the teacher of English to higher classes can be and frequently is a more formative force than the Religious Knowledge master or the Spiritual Father. These chapters of the report are of immediate relevance in Ireland. The chapter on the ordinary child, discussing the materialism and ethical confusion of many adolescents, is based on research in England, and cannot be applied simply here ; but it is not irrelevant. On the lips of many pupils—and teachers—' to do well in life ' means to make a lot of money. Since this is just the sort of implicit ideal that infects pupils, there are very few teachers who will not be helped by the probings of this wise and readable book.

Paul Andrews

A CONSCIENCE IN CONFLICT

A CONSCIENCE IN CONFLICT. The Life of St George Jackson Mivart. By Jacob W. Gruber. pp. 266+ x. Columbia University Press. London : Oxford University Press. 1961. 52s.

ST GEORGE JACKSON MIVART was born in London in 1827. In his seventeenth year he became a Catholic. Interested early in natural history he qualified in law but returned to his first love. He came at first under the influence of Owen whose evolutionary views even before the publication of *Origin of Species* prepared him for the new orientation of biological thought under Darwin. In 1858 he became a disciple and fast friend of Huxley through whom he met the future leaders of darwinism including Darwin himself. He readily accepted the theory of natural selection, but after maturer reflection he rejected it as primary casual agent in evolution though still according it a secondary role. His knowledge of the nature of the human soul made him postulate a special creative act to explain its origin in the evolution of man. Both these conclusions enunciated in his first important work *Genesis of Species* (1871) earned him the enmity of the darwinians and started a cleavage which became final after his well-meant but intemperate review of an eugenical work by Darwin's son, George.

Most of his remaining years were taken up, apart from first class scientific work, in showing that there was no incompatibility between religion and modern science, including historical and biblical science. In this attempt he finally gave expression to an uncompromising liberalism and on refusing to retract was denied the sacraments in January 1900. By the first week in April he was dead, a victim of the diabetes which he knew was killing him and probably also of a broken heart which he would not admit even to himself. Some years afterwards his friends, convinced that this final episode was utterly discordant with the rest of his life, procured medical testimony to the effects of the disease on the mind and character of its victim and his remains were re-interred with full Catholic rites. The author considers this gesture to be merely face-saving on the part of the Church.

These facts emerge clearly from this ' life ' of Mivart, though it is not a conventional biography : for instance, the fact that he was married must be deduced from two references to his son in the text and some quotations from the latter's letters. It is more a study of what the author apparently considers the inevitable failure of his effort to weld into an organic unity two utterly disparate elements, his science and his Catholic faith. This attempt and its two major crises, the break with the darwinians and the shipwreck of his faith, are of no small interest in the history of biology ; to the Catholic, to all believing Christians, it is of enthralling interest, and in so far as he had attained the essentials of a solution only to dash it finally by his own—mad ?— act it is all but Grecian in its tragedy. *All but*—because the author has not proved it *inevitable* in Mivart.

If this study had done justice to the quality of his struggle and its tragic denouement it would have achieved something of universal and lasting significance. But we must regretfully conclude that it fails in adequacy. That is

not to say that there are not excellent things in the book. The documentation and bibliography are very valuable and the author's habit of frequently letting the principal actors speak for themselves will make them come alive for the reader in their pleasant and less pleasant qualities alike. But the inadequacy is more fundamental ; it consists primarily in an inability to understand the intellectual and religious background of Mivart and the Catholicism of his day—or possibly of any day. Further, in matters scientific he seems unable, or unwilling to accord evolutionary status to any but the purest darwinism.

Mivart had the merit to point out the undoubted fact that similar structures have arisen independently in different groups in evolutionary history ; and then he had the misfortune to exaggerate the incidence of this convergent evolution as it is now called. In a study of the *Lemuroidea* (a group of the primates) in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London,* 1873, cited by the author, he pleads on the basis of this exaggerated idea that genetic considerations should be given a decidedly subordinate place *in classification.* The italics are important : he retains and reiterates his belief that evolution probably occurred and so ' real genetic affinity must exist, and when it can be securely detected must be most important'. Yet the author comments on this article : ' The theory of evolution which it espouses is so limited as to be compatible with the most rigid system of special creation'. Do words mean *anything?* How can *any* theory of evolution be compatible with ' *the most rigid system of special creation ?*'

The author cites Mivart affirming Owen's ' distinct enunciation of the evolution of species by the operation of ordinary secondary laws even before the *Origin of Species* saw the light'. Yet he brackets Owen with that great anatomist and palaeontologist but arch-anti-evolutionist Cuvier in a ' rigid universe ' (p. 22). Mivart firmly and repeatedly asserts that his opposition to Natural Selection as the primary explanation of evolution rests on scientific grounds alone, yet we are assured that in his case, as probably also in Owen's, it was due to theological exigencies (p. 20). The simple explanation seems to be that for the author any doubting of the *dogma* of natural selection cannot be scientific. It is the author who, even more than Mivart, confuses the various levels of explanation.

A good example of this defect can be seen in his horror of the doctrine of the divine ideas. It is a philosophical commonplace that all that is, is *known* by God and so exists as an Idea in the Divine Intellect from all eternity ; in fact Christian philosophy will go futher than Mivart's expression of the truth and say that it exists because it embodies or realizes some perfection, or imitability of the Divine Richness. In space and time this idea can be realized equally well by an evolutionary as by a fixist creation. Yet the author protests, ' Such a conception implies the acceptance of a doctrine of special creation even more rigid than that of the most devout creationist'.

Mivart's concept of the soul, the traditional Christian concept, provides another stumbling-block. In this we can do no better than let the author speak for himself. ' For Mivart the soul could only mean man's rational faculty, his intellect.' (p. 150) This equiparation of soul and intellect the author finds ' novel ' (though Mivart would not restrict soul to pure intellection). Again, ' In maintaining the uniqueness of the human mind, Mivart

was doing little more than reiterating the reality of the human soul whose unique creation had so often been proved by the early philosophers of the church and whose rationality was a heritage from Descartes' (p. 134) *Descartes ! ! !* And finally this gem, '. . . Catholic dogma must maintain the individuality of the individual intellect as it maintains the individuality, the "free will," of the individual soul.' To gloss 'individuality' by 'free will' is as philosophically naive as to refer, as he does on page 65, to the 'rationally derived data of a revealed philosophy.'

These passages are representative of a general trend in the book—lack of digestion of ideas. The author may be a man in a hurry who steals time from a busy day to dash off some pages of the work and gets no time for over-all correlation. Thus he expresses surprise at the shock of friend and foe alike at Mivart's final apostasy from his faith adding "because the direction of his writings and thinking was hardly mistakable to anyone who could read with understanding" (p. 145). A good case could be made for this assertion in view of the extremely liberal dictum on faith and reason in Mivart's article 'Liberty of Conscience' which appeared in the *Dublin Review* as early as 1876. Notwithstanding, a little earlier on page 142 the author speaks of the radical shift in Mivart's attitudes vis-à-vis the Church and "the rapidity with which it occurred." !

The passages quoted above on the soul will have given the reader the idea that the author has little sympathy with Catholicism. And although he makes obvious efforts to be fair and objective that is unfortunately so. Here the inadequacy is once more at a lower level, that of presuppositions and assumptions and lack of understanding. For him Catholicism is always 'medieval'. He has no real understanding of a Church conscious of a divine mission to guard absolute truth and a divine guarantee of essential inerrancy while so doing. Mivart accepted these claims with the necessary act of supernatural faith after the rational preliminaries—*praeambula fidei*—which can satisfy the keenest intellect. The essentially provisional findings of science are generally neutral in this context but where they raise questions that impinge on man's supernatural destiny it is not reasonable even on a human level to make of the provisional a criterion to measure the absolute, as theological Liberalism would have had us do. If he understood this, the author would have a readier sympathy with the admitted over-rigidity of the Church's immediate reaction to a movement that challenged her very foundations.

MARTIN BRENNAN

FERMENT IN EAST AFRICA

WHITE TO MOVE? By Paul Foster. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode. 1961. Pp. 199 illustrated 25s.

The author of this interesting book, Father Paul Foster, is chaplain to the Catholic students of University College, East Africa, better known as Makerere College, Uganda. Father Foster is also a member of the academic staff as lecturer in education and history. Within the framework of a travel-book we are introduced to the complexities of political advancement in a vast area. He gives us glimpses of varied tribal groups from the still unsophisticated pastoral Karamajong of Uganda and the Masai of Kenya to the advanced and politically conscious Kikuyu and Baganda. He takes us from the ethereal beauty of Kilimanjaro and its progressive Wachagga coffee growers to the land-hungry Kikuyu of Kenya's White Highlands. He goes among the isolated groups in the Southern highlands of Tanganyika and the still more inaccessible people of the Ruwenzori. We savour the cosmopolitan in Nairobi and we see there a typical example of squalor and beauty, European opulence and African poverty coalescing to produce a city. There is the oriental flavour of the sea ports: European, Moslem and Hindu jostle each other in the markets and bazaars of Mombasa and Dar-Es-Salaam. The skyline is fretted by steeple and minaret, the slanting masts of dhows, the plumes of tall palms and the funnels of liners. This is a dazzling kaleidoscope of beauty and diversity which must be unparalleled in any other part of Africa or the world. But the author is not greatly preoccupied with places and scenery.

The philosopher and the student of politics dominates. He is chiefly preoccupied with people and their thoughts and aspirations. He is most penetrating in trying to interpret problems of advancement from the Africans' point of view. He gives many examples of their apparently illogical viewpoint, but he tries to enter into the thoughts and reconcile the aspirations of the people he works and lives for. He introduces us to the big groupings—the still tribal (whether primitive or advanced), the urbanized and detribalized, and finally the educated, from all these groups, who are best known to him. The best chapters in the book are those devoted to Makerere; elsewhere the author is most at home when he tells of the problems and outlook of his students who come from the areas he passes through. Sometimes anecdotes of Makerere rather too abruptly break into his descriptive narrative. Sometimes we could be allowed to draw unaided the conclusions from his line of argument, at times suggestion and statement would suffice to create the atmosphere for our rethinking on controversial issues, occasionally the author labours the obvious. But these are small faults, easily absolved by anyone who has had much discussion with African students on topics of religion, politics, morals or history. To wrestle long with prolixity and strange processes of reasoning is almost inevitably to shed some of that subtlety and lightness of touch which we associate with our own lecture halls. The long contact with new and strange thought-processes and minds as yet barely ajar to the storehouses of the great thinkers of the past has taken its toll, robbing the author

of some vivacity and committing him too starkly to his thesis; it also has its compensations.

No mere traveller or journalist could have given us this penetrating analysis of the African now emerging at high speed to direct his own destinies in three great countries. It is the thinking that goes on in Makerere to-day that is of vital importance. Makerere is the brain-centre of this vastly sprawling trio. Father Foster appears through his own writing as one intensely absorbed in the great riddles of the day. He is completely devoted to the task of interpreting the problems of young Africans in the light of past ages, but he is not a conservative of the old die-hard school; he is a progressive with his finger aloft getting a reading of 'the wind of change' as it freshens over Kampala, Dar-Es-Salaam and Nairobi. As priest and educator he is keenly aware of his mission, he is conscious that the one thing of abiding worth which Europe has brought to Africa is Christianity. He looks at the settler and administrator, his own countrymen, with a dispassionate and penetrating eye. He sees their selfishness, their inability to think and live other than as members of a dominant class and race and nation. He does not condone faults but he gives credit where it is due. He looks for dedication in the administrator, in the purveyor of the white man's civilization. He does not always find it. He laments the slow pace of realistic thinking in the past. He is all the time acutely alive to the urgency of the problem in East Africa to-day. Time is so urgently needed but time is running out. Time for what? Perhaps the answer to that is also the answer to the questioning title of this book *White to Move?* The quest is for a sound, intellectual movement grounded on Christian morality and justice, stemming from the greatness of past achievements, but resolutely intent on welding old and new, white and black, Christian and Moslem in a common purpose. Rethinking new problems in the light of a well-tried philosophy by men conscious of dedicated leadership seems to be the key to the intricate maze which Father Foster unfolds before us. Surely his students hold the key, but will they use it?

JOHN FITZGERALD

LITERATURE AND ART

THE MIRROR AND THE LAMP. Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition. By M. H. Abrams. London: Oxford University Press.

THE SYMBOLIC ROSE. By Barbara Seward. Columbia University Press; Oxford University Press. 40s.

THE chief merit of Mr Abrams's book is that it throws into striking relief the enormous change that poetry and aesthetic theory underwent with the triumph of Romanticism in the eighteenth century. The literary amateur has hitherto been willing to concede that a poetic revolution did take place in nineteenth century England when the canons of neo-classic criticism and poetic diction were thrown, down but this revolution is seldom appreciated

as the comprehensive and far-reaching phenomenon that it was. In fact, the characteristics of the change most often adverted to are the less essential, more marginal ones ; the rejection of ' poetic diction ', the return to rustic speech, the turning from the world that ' is too much with us ' to the joys of nature.

These marginal features are obvious, easy to grasp, conveniently detachable from the central issues and they give the comforting illusion of comprehension. I fancy that it was for similar reasons that the neo-classicists settled so doggedly for Aristotle's unities while ignoring the far more important body of his dramaturgy.

Mr Abrams's work is in every sense comprehensive. It shows a vast and clear understanding of critical history as seen against every relevant concomitant issue of philosophy, ethics, theology and aesthetics. It has also the supreme gift of objective impartiality. Yet there is something of the poetic in his approach and method. This is especially evident in his emphasis on metaphors and analogies that dominate the development of successive critical theories. It is fascinating to follow his progress as he traces the various analogues for poetic composition, from Aristotle's mimetic criterion of the mirror right down to Hazlitt's expressive image of the lamp. We find art compared to the fountain emanating from the poet's soul (Plotinus), ' a candle of the Lord for illuminating and irradiating objects ' (Nathaniel Culverwell), the Aeolian lyre played upon by poetic inspiration (Shelley and Wordsworth), and Coleridge's central and influential image of organic growth. ' If Plato's dialectic is a wilderness of mirrors, Coleridge's is a very jungle of vegetation.' It would however be a great mistake to give the impression that Mr Abrams is enslaved to the analogical interpretation of aesthetic theory. It is one of his excellences that he gives it its due importance but one of his few deviations into verbal drollery, perhaps unintentional, makes his stand quite clear. ' The long survival of the reflector as archetype demonstrates its aptness and suggestiveness as a point of departure for aesthetic theory. The endemic disease of analogical thinking, however, is hardening of the categories.'

When the Romantic concept of art took over, it overturned radically all the central canons of traditional criticism. All the delicately refined tenets of the neo-classicists Boileau, Johnson and Pope went by the board, the basic idea that poetry must please, that it must be a true, if selective imitation of reality, that it should exhibit a ' nice ' proportion of parts to the whole, that its language and images were the dress and decoration of thought. All these precepts were drastically revised. And the irony of it all was that Boileau, the high-priest of neo-classicist aesthetics, was unintentionally responsible. It was he who in 1674 translated Longinus and it was Longinus that proved to be the spring-board for the whole Romantic reappraisal. Longinus's aesthetics were rigorously accommodated to the neo-classical view of art for the rest of the seventeenth century but in the writings of John Dennis—himself in most respects a stern neo-classicist—the romantic elements in Longinus made a break-through. Dennis is attracted by Longinus's emphasis on the pathetic in poetry as a source of its sublimity. He ends up by reaching the conclusion that is to dominate the nineteenth century, that ultimately the distinguishing mark of poetry as against prose, is not its mimetic but its

emotive character. The same conclusion is reached roughly fifty years later by Bishop South, Professor of Poetry at Oxford, in his exposition of Longinus. In a word, reason speaks literally, the passions poetically.

And John Keble, who was to succeed him in the chair of Poetry at Oxford a century later, who used Longinus extensively as a model, expressed his debt to Bishop South in the forming of his radically romantic theory of aesthetics. Mr Abrams describes Keble as 'the founding father of what is now one of the most prominent and intensively cultivated systems of critical premises and procedures'. The significance of South's earlier exposition of seminal romanticism is further attested by Herder who acknowledged his debt to his lectures and who was to become one of the most influential of the German Romantic apologists.

It is possible that Mr Abrams over-rates Keble's contribution to the development of the Romantic aesthetic, but I for one was convinced of his importance. According to the author, 'Keble's lectures must be surely regarded as, under their pious and diffident surface, the most sensationally radical criticism of their time'. In his theory is found the proto-Freudian idea that poetry is the expression of repressed feelings that must otherwise, through decency, remain unknown, that poetry that is not tinctured by the personality of the poet, is absolutely not poetry at all, that the true business of criticism is to trace the poem back to the character and life of the poet. These views in fact represent the extreme falsehoods of the Romantic attitude and they would not, as expressed, have been entirely acceptable to either Coleridge or Wordsworth.

It is impossible to pursue Mr Abrams through the length and breadth of his massive and very ordered exposition. There seems to be no relevant area of speculation that he has not dealt with. The important German Romantics Herder, Schiller, the Schlegels and Goethe are thoroughly analysed and their influence clearly indicated. It is, of course, the English Romantics that occupy most of his space and here he dwells largely on Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley. His study of Coleridge is especially good. For some reason he leaves Matthew Arnold to his last few pages and Ruskin's valuable contributions to Romantic thought are ignored. These are defects but they are small ones when seen against the very considerable merit of the whole.

Finally it would have been interesting had Mr Abrams traced the trend of critical thought down to the present day where we find many of its assumptions challenged by Eliot, Brooks and Kenneth Burke. But perhaps he intends to deal with this phase in another book. If so it ought to be a book worth buying.

Miss Barbara Seward's *The Symbolic Rose* is a less ambitious book in that it does not attempt to embrace literary movements in their entirety but rather chooses to pursue one central theme through several centuries. Miss Seward is interested in the rose as a dominant symbol in the literature of Western Europe. 'Since the flower has flourished wherever symbolism flourished, a history of the rose becomes a history of symbolism.'

The author takes the rose that is the symbolic culmination of Dante's *Divine Comedy* as her point of departure. Here the symbol is imbued with

a tremendous richness and significance as it is made to embody Our Lady, Paradise, grace and divine love, reconciling them with the hitherto opposed concept of terrestrial courtly love. The study takes us through the whole medieval literature with a special scrutiny of the *Roman de la Rose;* comparatively little space is given to Renaissance roses and it is on English Symbolism since the beginning of the Romantic movement that the bulk of the study rests. Yeats is treated as the pivotal figure in modern symbolic art.

He was perhaps the greatest and 'certainly the first to build a new and symbolic art upon the ruins of Romantic hyper-sensitivity'. The chapter on Yeats strikes me as the best, as it casts considerable light on the significance of his Rosicrucian occultism. Richard Ellman has covered much of this ground before but Miss Seward from her special critical standpoint lights up many of the obscurities of Yeats's symbolism. Especially on the subject of the rose, a central symbol in Yeats's poetry, she exhibits a great deal of critical dexterity in showing how it successively became a symbol for beauty, eternal love, human love in the figure of Maud Gonne and love of Ireland.

There is a chapter on the contemporary rose symbol and a chapter each on Eliot and Joyce analysing their creative techniques and preoccupations in relation to the author's central theme. Miss Seward died in 1958 at the age of thirty and this is the one full length criticial work that she left behind her. Her book showed great promise and occasional achievement.

AUGUSTINE MARTIN

THE POET'S CIRCUITS. By Padraig Colum. Oxford University Press. 1960. 21s.

NOSTALGIA or at least retrospection seems to be an essential part of the Irish artistic makeup. Whether writing in Irish or English our poets have been obsessively concerned with the golden ages of the past, real or mythical. George Russell was feeling a little impatient with this spirit when he wrote :

> They weave the necromancer's spell
> And burst the graves where martyrs slept
> Their ancient story to retell
> Renewing tears the dead had wept.

But his Yeats was meanwhile exploring the nebulae of the heroic age, his Stephens was immersed in the seventeenth century, Austin Clarke grimly meditating the middle ages. Actually Synge, who almost completely resisted the lure of the past, had the last laugh on Russell when, on contemplating one of

the former's paintings of the ' plumed yet skinny Shee ' he himself resolved to go west instead of back.

> We'll sleep in Red Dan Sally's ditch
> And drink at Tubber Fair
> And poach with Red Dan Philly's bitch
> The badger and the hare.

Mr Colum, in this most interesting volume, ranges over every field of Irish tradition from the primitive age to the recent past. His approach to tradition is utterly different from that of any other Irish poet. He is not concerned, as Yeats was, with myth-making ; he has no predilection for the bizarre or spectacular, as Stephens had ; he is not even nostalgic as Mr Clarke sometimes is. His interest in the past is utterly unselfish, he is not seeking vehicles for his own preoccupations ; he creates humbly and out of love. This may be partly due to the professional folklorist in him, but I suspect that it springs from a deeper poetic concern for truth and reality. In any case it is this quality in his work that makes the characters of his dramatic lyrics so alive, so historically true; and it is for the same reason that his 'Old woman of the roads', his ' Drover ' and his ' Poor scholar of the Forties ' have found their way into our national consciousness. That is why his very beautiful lyric ' She moved through the fair ' has taken its place with grace and naturalness among the most beloved of our folk-songs. His version of the past is so obviously the real thing.

The present volume could be taken as Mr Colum's challenge to posterity. It contains the best of his Irish poetry which he has cunningly organized into a formal or thematic unity. Adopting the medieval Irish convention of the bardic circuit the poet takes us on a series of poetic journeys around Ireland. Thus he is enabled to move easily from age to age, from one level of society to another and to introduce against their proper backgrounds the best of the characters that he has created in his long and extremely homogeneous period of creation. In this way he provides himself with a flexible frame into which he can fit his best poetry. To complete the task of unification he has written in graceful though often pedestrian fore-pieces in iambic pentameter to fill in the relevant landscape, create the appropriate moods and blend all the pieces into one harmonious whole. The book therefore exhibits, to best advantage, the extraordinary consistency of the poet's vision, the solidly rooted basis of his inspiration, the seemingly casual but actually meticulous craftmanship that never seems to creak in producing whatever effect a poem requires.

And yet one is dissatisfied. Why has there been no development? Why are the recent poems almost indistinguishable in style and feeling from those of fifty years ago ? Why do many modern readers get from such an undeniably fine poet such an impression of earth-bound limitation ? These charges are not completely unjustified. Let us look for instance, at the opening fore-piece. The first two movements go very well :

> From where the solitary crow, the grey,
> Infamous in our sagas, fluttered over
> The flatness of the bog, to where familiar
> Crows gathered in trees beside a house,
> He drove me : there were miles of rutted road.

This is a well-drawn piece of landscape, the language flows unforced, its images are stark, evocative and nicely poised between the real and the fabulous. The mood is right for the entry of his archetypical storyteller, Owen Paralon. But on the next page we find disenchantment as Paralon describes the horse-judging at the Ballinasloe fair.

> It would be just as blundering, he averred,
> For one like him to show misjudgment there,
> As for one not to know the dance's figure
> In house where people gathered on Shrove Night
> And had to place himself behind the door
> For shame of ignorance.

It is not the prosiness of the comparison that offends one so much—one could also observe that the comparing of the obvious and understandable with the dully esoteric is not really in the interests of clarity and right emphasis—but it is the pedantic sense of rhythm that makes him leave out the article between ' in ' and ' house'. The chief merit of the lines is their casual conversational quality and this is suddenly destroyed by this prim unnecessary omission. This occurs much too often in the sequence, and it leads one to wonder why such a fine writer in this day and age should be so inflexibly attached to the clump of iambics. And this brings us to one of the poet's limitations, his lack of metrical resource. The metre in this book is overwhelmingly iambic ; he seems to have felt little desire to experiment over the years. In fact his style seems to have stiffened, as the example quoted above is from his most recent verse.

But there is a deeper cause for our uneasiness about Mr Colum's poetry. It is to be found, I think, in the fact that his poetry falls so indeterminately between the classical and the romantic. He will not let us classify him. His inclination is towards the romantic, but then he has not the violence of feeling, the extravagance, the desire for personal expression that makes even bad romantic poetry so arresting. Yet, despite the competence of his craftsmanship he falls short of that finely chiselled objective excellence of classical art that is, in its own way, equally arresting. He is somewhere between *Kilty Stobling* and *Moralities,* lacking the aggressive forcefulness of Mr Kavanagh on one hand and the eye-catching brilliance of Mr Kinsella on the other. Thus Mr Colum eludes all our vulgar attempts to classify him and asserts his individuality only by consistent self-effacement. Allied to this there is his attitude towards the past. He is so much part of his heritage that he never stands back from it to reappraise it as Mr Kavanagh and Mr Clarke frequently do. He seems to accept it uncritically, neither with shame or with pride—simply with thanks. It sets up no personal tensions or anxieties in him ; he is completely and shamelessly without *angst.* (This hardly helps his box-office nowadays.) His traditional material passes through his hands unaltered except that it comes out as art.

But his lack of anxiety or tension must not be taken as a failure in feeling or intensity. The intensity is played down but it is always present, generated unfailingly by the passionate personal sympathy between the poet and his

material. Within his own lifetime this material has become more and more remote but Mr Colum's ability to re-evoke it has not faltered. He is pre-eminently the poet of nineteenth century Ireland and no poet has re-created it as well as he. Some of his creations have become so familiar to us that we are inclined to overlook how vivid and real they are :

> And I must walk this road that winds
> 'Twixt bog and bog, while east there lies
> A city with its men and books ;
> With treasures open to the wise,
> Heart words for equals, comrade-looks
> Down here they have but tale and song,
> They talk Repeal the whole night long.

The character of the poor scholar in coming so vigorously to life brings a whole world into being with him, the cottage culture of the 19th century. All of his characters contribute towards his general historical pattern and yet they appear to be created for their own sakes ; the old woman longing for her little house, the drover plodding from the wet hills of Leitrim and his

> '. . . . thoughts on white ships
> And the King of Spain's daughter ' ;

the spadesman, the sower, the scythesman, the tin-whistle player.

Sometimes his characters loom into large symbolic types like the Plougher who stands beside his work silhouetted between heaven and hell. But most often they are types of the poet either in their inner aspirations or in the trades they ply. Of them all, I think Mr Colum's poetry is most closely paralleled in the work of the basket maker, from whom, he tells us, he bought ' a withied shape ' ; this is the artificer whose works are shapely but anonymous because :

> ' There's no one marks them with a craftman's name '

I think Mr Colum would be pleased by the comparison, he lets him go with such a flourish :

> I watched him go, his stock-in-trade about him,
> " I travel Ireland's length and breadth " he said.
> There was dominion in the way he said it,
> And in his even way towards other roofs,
> A basket-maker, an itinerant.

In arranging this volume the poet completely sacrifices chronology to his structural plan. As he provides no index and even replaces the original title with numbers it is obvious that he does not invite a chronological appraisal. He is right in this. The volume is quite homogeneous, his most recent poems are virtually indistinguishable from pieces written almost sixty years ago. What one was inclined to view as a limitation works to his advantage. The work of a lifetime finally coalesces into a single substantial work of art.

Again, can it be asserted that lack of technical development in a poet is necessarily a limitation? A poet presumably modifies and adapts his techniques

as he finds himself confronted with new materials, moods, more complex or more simple thought patterns. But Mr Colum's material is still the same ; and his relationship to it does not seem to have altered or evolved sufficiently to demand fresh technical resources. So perhaps it is we who are being pedantic and unreasonable.

It therefore remains for me to recommend this book unreservedly. As a challenge to posterity it is very formidable indeed, for Mr Colum has provided against every contingency. Even those parts of it which are a little pedestrian can be claimed as eminently appropriate to the rhythm of a medieval circuit.

AUGNUSTIE MARTIN

NICOLAS POUSSIN. By Thomas MacGreevy. Dublin : The Dolmen Press. 1960. 21s.

No art springs unheralded and in studying different arts and cultures in the past it is common to look back for at least a promise of the new embedded in some previous manifestation. Painters in this century have looked to Cezanne and Cezanne in his studies looked to Poussin, the seventeenth century French painter, for the formal and architectural foundation in his painting.

In his study of Nicolas Poussin Dr MacGreevy gives us Cezanne as the originator of the revival of interest in the painter but he suggests that the art of Italo-French ballet, which was developed by the Russians and which arrived in Paris in the early years of this century, was partly responsible or a contributory cause.

This is a charming book and his introduction of the Russian Ballet in this context—the suggestion that the ' most nobly choreographic of all painters ' was influential in the eclectic, exciting and brilliant display of that brilliant company—gives us an insight into the method pursued by the author in his study. It is relaxed, it is evocative ; sometimes it is provocative.

Poussin, an artist who, Dr MacGreevy says in a disarming introduction, had been a ' haunt ' with him for nearly forty years, is placed in his period of history and followed imaginatively through his authenticated journeys and experiences. He gives the story of his life, his early struggles and delays, and relates his art to the trends of thought that were current at the time. Christendom was engaged in anguished reorganization ; the classic themes of the Renaissance were dominant in painting ; Poussin, influenced in the direction which his art will take by the sight of Raphael's drawings, sets his face for Rome.

We are given an understanding of his composition and of his use of colour through analogies with music and of his approach to character by an interesting divagation on Yeats and his theory of the use of masks in the theatre. These discussions are lucid and illuminating. Poussin's visit to Venice, the influence of this is traced by reference to the Acis and Galatea painting in our own National Gallery, is described in terms which leave no doubt that where many painters of the time used classic themes as an exposition of craftsmanship Poussin

himself was an artist working towards a disciplined expression of what was 'intimate and involuntary' in himself.

Often by implication and sometimes by interpolations Dr McGreevy seems to suggest that the ideal in art is of itself more praiseworthy than the expression of a more fallible reality.

In a succession of statements which he quotes from Lionello Venturi on Giorgione's Venus, *perfettamente casta* (perfectly chaste) he seems to suggest that the value of the work of art is heightened by the character of the model in some way. That, in fact, the ideal lies in kind. This confusion enters in in another context, that of religious art (i.e. the religious subject in art) being of itself superior to the classical subject.

Neither the grandeur of the classic with its overtones of myth nor the temper and truth of the religious as subject can assure good painting and it goes without saying that the religious paintings of Poussin are not necessarily superior to his classical works. We are to suppose from what Dr MacGreevy writes, and I agree, that Poussin reached a level of universal values in many of his classical compositions, something beyond the pageantry and display inherent in the themes ; his religious paintings are sometimes confined in their spiritual appeal because of the introduction of stately classicism in a theme that is of its essence near to the heart. Art engages our aesthetic sensibilities. They are closely allied to the spiritual but in the context of religious faith, not necessarily synonymous.

I am grateful for the book and its reminder that Poussin's art is grave and beautiful, intellectual and complex. If I feel that, gravity and beauty being present in all his work, the complexity militates against rather than promotes the religious expression, this may well be the association of his rich imagination with the classical tradition. All the author's persuasive powers do not persuade me that the Holy Family 'posed in an architectural setting' is really great religious art though it is the work of a very great painter.

The book is beautifully produced. The planning of paragraphs and margins makes the pages pleasant to the reader and the audacity of the beautiful capital letters of title page and cover show a worthy sense of design. If the illustrations are somewhat lightly inked we gain in the retention of detail and the relation of tones in complex compositions.

ELIZABETH RIVERS

THE CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH By Bernard Leeming, S.J. London: Darton, Longman & Todd. Westminster, MD : The Newman Press. 1960. Pp. xii..340. 35s.

The Churches and the Church is not merely (as the subtitles state) 'a study of ecumenism', 'a guide to the problems of Christian disunity and the attempts to solve them'; it is in fact the first full-length study by an English-speaking Catholic theologian of the spirit and forms of the Protestant Ecumenical Movement. And not only is this latest contribution to theology by Fr Leeming a pioneering piece of work in a peculiarly difficult field, it has besides all those

qualities which in a short time have already ensured his *Principles of Sacramental Theology* a second English and a first French edition. *The Churches and the Church* is distinguished even more than its predecessor by the range and depth of its researches, by the sweep of its erudition and the balance of its judgements, but above all by the Christian humility and charity which inform the whole and make it notable not only as a study *of* ecumenism but also as a study *in* ecumenism.

Latecomers as we mostly are in this country to the ecumenical scene and lacking in consequence the factual and theoretical background required to follow and participate in the movement, our great present need is precisely for just such a competent introduction to the facts and initiation to the ways of ecumenism as is provided in *The Churches and the Church.* Fr Leeming's careful treatment of the World Council of Churches, in particular his penetrating analysis of the Toronto Declaration and his able discussion of the proposed integration of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, will more than satisfy all the sincere curiosity about the latter and its forthcoming General Assembly at New Delhi and the attitude to it of the Roman Catholic Church aroused by the recent much-publicized meeting in Dublin of the British Council of Churches. Similarly his excellent account and evaluation of the course of Anglican-Presbyterian relations from 1957 to 1959 will make highly-rewarding reading for all who look forward to closer ties with the Presbyterian Churches and whose hopes, having been dashed by Castlerock, have once again been raised by the news of a resumption in the near future of the official conversations and by the announcement at the recent General Synod that the Church of Ireland would be represented on the panel of Anglican theologians. Indeed there is scarcely any aspect of the Ecumenical Movement (at least in its Protestant expressions) on which Fr Leeming does not here provide us with the background information we now so sorely need. Long familiar with the movement and one of the Catholic observers at the Central Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches at St Andrew's last summer he is an expert guide to its organizational, doctrinal and terminological complexities. And precisely *because* the information he conveys is accompanied by confessional Roman Catholic commentary, his book must surely have an added interest for the growing number of non-Roman Catholics who in these days also wish to know and understand their separated brethren. *The Churches and the Church* is a book from which we all have much to learn—and to unlearn. It cannot but be warmly welcomed and highly recommended.

MICHAEL HURLEY

PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES, VOL. X. 1960. St Patrick's College, Maynooth. pp. 309. 21s.

THE current volume of *Philosophical Studies* provides the usual wide variety of topics. Light is thrown on Wittgenstein by Fr C. B. Daly, Don McCarthy treats well of Russell's ethics, Hume's approach to causality is aired at some length by M. O'Donnell, while abstraction in St Albert the Great is considered

by H. Johnston. We could not of course notice the various contributions in detail ; perhaps however a mention of some points of general interest would be welcome.

In his essay on *Law, Reason, Will,* R. B. Lumb points to the significance of the return of the German legal philosopher Radbruck, under the pressure of recent events, to a more thomistic notion of law. The related subject of political authority is treated of by Donald Kreitzer who, in discussing various associated problems, brings out very clearly certain inadequacies in traditional political theory. Both these essays are valuable, not only because of their clarity, but also because they crystallize an accumulating suspicion of current ethical and political thinking. At bottom it seems that contemporary philosophies of human action, whether in the British mode, in neo-thomist circles, or in the Kantian tradition, lean heavily on the will, underplay the practical understanding and relegate prudence to a Cinderella role. Clearly, because of such a stress, law and its obligatoriness can become dissociated from intelligence, and discussion of the origin of political authority can become as removed from reality as Kepler's quest for cosmic symmetry.

Gavin Ardley's essay on *Philosophies of Appearance and Reality* is a refreshing and novel treatment of the division of primary and secondary qualities. The consequences of the dichotomy are well illustrated and various extremist tendencies are censured. However, no clear view eventually emerges. While Mr Ardley looks to Plato and Aristotle as sources of genuine synthesis, he nonetheless manifests what seems an incompatible desire for an ' amiable metaphysics ', one which, so to speak, leaves the ' appearance ' with a respectable share of reality. Speaking of Plato he says, ' he leads us for a time out of the Cave in order that we may return refreshed to the life of the cave '. ' Refreshed ' however is hardly an apt description of the painful return to the cave in Plato's Republic. And surely the initial transition from the cave has its parallel both in the dialectic delivery of philosophers and in the puzzled withdrawal of the scientists from the shackles of animal extroversion ? It is only outside the cave that a genuine amiable synthesis including both image and symbol can emerge.

Besides these and other stimulating essays there are almost a hundred pages of reviews and critical notices which contribute to no small extent to the value of this number of *Philosophical Studies.*

PHILIP MCSHANE

[*In this issue we have devoted so many pages to St Patrick that we have had to cut down the number of pages given to book reviews.—Editor.*]